

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COHESION AND CASUALTY RATES:
THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION AND THE 7TH INFANTRY DIVISION
AT INCHON AND THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Military History

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2004

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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Thesis Title: The Relationship Between Cohesion and Casualty Rates: The 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division at Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COHESION AND CASUALTY RATES: THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION AND THE 7TH INFANTRY DIVISION AT INCHON AND THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR, by Donald K. Wols, 133 pages.

The 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions fought two campaigns in Korea between September and December 1950. These divisions' levels of unit cohesion prior to and during their employment affected the number of men who became casualties during the three and one-half months of combat. Casualty rates can be affected by friendly-enemy force ratios and tactical advantages, but this historical analysis shows that units opposing similar enemies in similar tactical situations still have markedly different casualty rates that are not attributable to enemy numbers and disposition. Programs such as the Selective Service and the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army (KATUSA), originally designed to help combat units, ultimately destroyed any hope for cohesion that the 7th Infantry Division might have had. Comparing the performances of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division, after highlighting the myriad of circumstances impacting those performances, defines a relationship between their levels of cohesion and the numbers of casualties they suffered. It is clear that the 1st Marine Division was more cohesive than the 7th Infantry Division and suffered fewer casualties as a result.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is dedicated to the thousands of Americans who have given their lives in the defense of their country's values and interests. The study began as an attempt to help reconcile the fates of the more than 8,100 American men still missing from the Korean War. The initial research was based on several years of the author's intimate dealings with the personal records and circumstances of loss of these men. It was hoped that this continued research would somehow be applicable to the vastly incomplete explanations of where the missing in action (MIA) might be and to assist the soldiers and scientific staff of the Joint Personnel Command (JPAC), Hawaii, in their mission to recover and identify the remains of these soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen. Although the detail was not reached in regard to where these men might be, the story behind why these men might have become missing in the first place was a fortuitous result.

The following people helped with the research and preparation of this project in more ways than they know. First, I want to thank my wife, Helen, for her countless hours reading and rereading my initial drafts and offering her advice and opinions. Her patience and sacrifice during my late nights and long weeks were second to none. Second, Dr. Paul Edwards, Director of the Center for the Study of the Korean War in Independence, Missouri, spent his personal time and resources to assist me in gathering much needed sources of information and offering his personal testimony. Additionally, Dr. Edwards has to be commended for his tireless effort in keeping the Korean War and its lessons alive. Lastly, I want to thank the many others whose path I crossed and who offered me the tidbit of information I needed at that moment.

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ACRONYMS

CPV	Chinese People's Volunteers
FECOM	Far East Command
FMF	Fleet Marine Force
FM	Frequency Modulating
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JPAC	Joint Personnel Accounting Command
KATUSA	Korean Augmentation to the United States Army
MAW	Marine Air Wing
MIA	Missing in Action
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
ORO	Operations Research Office
PMKOR	Prisoner of War and Missing from Korea
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKA	Republic of Korea Army
UMS	Unit Manning System

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 25 June 1950, ten division-sized units of the Soviet equipped North Korean People's Army (NKPA) moved south across the 38th Parallel into the Republic of Korea (ROK) and began a bloody drive aimed at occupying South Korea. United States forces were soon dispatched to aid South Korea and in less than sixty-five days, the Eighth Army suffered over 24,000 combat casualties in its desperate attempt to stem the North Korean tide and regain control of the lost ground.¹ After three years of ebb and flow, American casualties would surpass 150,000 men with over 33,000 killed in action and over 8,000 of them left missing in action (MIA).² Could the enormous number of casualties have been foreseen? Why did units suffer so many casualties? What lessons can be learned from the Korean War that will prevent such numbers of casualties from occurring again?

Many contemporary works attempt to encapsulate casualty issues with various theses. These theses range from simple historical story telling to political conspiracy theories created in anger over the loss of so many Americans. This paper will address a topic that is somewhere in the middle of these two extremes, that is, the relationship between unit cohesion and the number of casualties suffered by units in the Korean War. Today's Army doctrine speaks to a direct relationship between cohesion and unit performance and the thesis of this paper is that such a direct relationship also existed during the Korean War. This paper is a study of two American divisions that fought in Korea from 15 September through December of 1950. It attempts to show how different

levels of unit cohesion affected the number of men who became casualties during these three and one-half months of combat.

Brief Historical Setting

For centuries, the control of Korea was strategically advantageous for influencing trade, labor, and the harvesting of natural resources in the Far East. Korea, only 575 miles long and averaging 150 miles in width, shares a long border with resource-rich Manchuria, possesses a small entry point into eastern Russia, allows access to the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan from numerous deep and shallow sea ports along hundreds of miles of shoreline, and is a relative stone's throw away from the Japanese islands. For centuries Korea remained a battleground for countries, particularly Japan, Russia, and China, which sought to either control the geographic hub in the East or prevent its control by the others. Many times throughout Korea's history, foreign governments either controlled or attempted to control Korea, culminating most recently with the 1905 occupation and subsequent annexation of Korea by Japan after defeating Czarist Russia on the battlefield in Manchuria.³ With the annexation and colonization of Korea, Japan obtained hegemony throughout the Far East and ruthlessly ruled Korea for four decades.

But after the Japanese surrender to the United States in 1945, the problem for the Americans became a question of not only how to remove Japanese forces from the Korean peninsula without causing a complete collapse of civil order, but how to accept that surrender while preventing the spread of the conflicting communist ideology and control by the Soviet Union. Allowing the empire-building Russians to move through and liberate all of Korea from tyrannical Japanese rule would likely threaten the future democratic independence of Korea. As a result, the American government proposed a

line of demarcation that would allow the Russians to remove Japanese influence from the north and the Americans to remove it in the south. Since no natural feature divided the country into adequate zones, the 38th Parallel was selected as the demarcation because it split the country into two basically equal regions. The proposal was accepted by Great Britain and Russia, and American troops were sent into Korea during the late summer of 1945.

After three years of debate between the Russians and the Americans, regarding how to construct a viable plan for unifying the two Koreas under a single ideology and governmental system, no agreement could be reached and separate governing bodies were installed on the two sides of the parallel: the Republic of Korea behind Dr. Syngman Rhee in the south and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea behind Premier Kim Il Sung in the north. In 1949, with their commitments in Korea met, the Americans pulled out the last troops to execute their two post-World War II priorities: one, the occupation of the Japanese islands to enforce the terms of surrender, and two, the focusing of military and diplomatic energy to rebuild war-torn Europe. To the United States, Korea no longer represented a priority of interest to national security and Korea's unification would be left to the Koreans to achieve in the coming years. But to the communist North Korean regime there was satisfaction only in unifying the two Koreas under its ideology, even if it meant waging war.

In the early morning of 25 June 1950, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossed the 38th Parallel and began its mad dash toward the south through ill-prepared and ill-equipped ROK forces. By 5 July 1950, LTC Charles B. Smith and an advanced American task force from the 24th Infantry Division were in defensive positions

straddling Route 1, approximately twenty-two miles south of Seoul, to delay North Korean forces so that two American infantry divisions from Japan and a multitude of UN forces could be debarked at Pusan. The change in American policy toward Korea was as quick and unexpected as the North Korean attack. President Harry S. Truman, on the advice of his cabinet and the urging from General MacArthur, Commanding General of Far East Command (FECOM), made the decision to commit forces to Korea. The decision was not based on saving the South Korean people, per se, but on the sudden realization that a failure to act would invite communism to spread throughout Asia, ultimately threatening Japan, and putting the Americans in the same threatened position it had been in prior to the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor. And a communist bid for Asian hegemony would do just that. Again the geographic jewel, Korea, was at war—war that would be fought over the next three years and yield more than 150,000 American killed, wounded, and missing.

Problem

Shortly after he assumed command of Eighth Army on 26 December 1950, General Matthew B. Ridgway issued a directive to his commanders which said in part, “withdraw so as to achieve maximum punishment, maximum delay, consistent with the maintenance intact of your major units. *Remove your sick, wounded, and dead*, leave no usable equipment behind; exercise ruthless control of any slight break which may undermine morale.”⁴ Even in one of the most critical moments of the Korean War, casualty recovery was foremost in the mind of the combatant commander. Shortly after General Ridgway made his comment, General Ned Almond commented on the attrition of the North Korean II Corps by almost 50 percent by stating, “we have completely

disrupted the cohesion and organization” of the enemy.⁵ General Ridgway felt that casualties and casualty recovery had an impact on morale, and morale impacted success on the battlefield. General Almond also drew a direct correlation between casualty rates and unit cohesion. Again, this paper is a study to determine whether or not unit cohesion is related to casualty rates in combat. For this, the Korean War is a perfect model because American units with every combination of circumstance in military readiness were present: some units were completely unprepared, some were trained and ready, and other units were in between.

There is certainly no shortage of information on the abysmal state of the 1950 American Far East Command. Almost every source of Korean War history begins with the premise that the first Army combat units sent to Korea were unprepared, under-strength, ill equipped, and poorly led at the tactical level. “The units consisted largely of young and inexperienced soldiers, armed with police type weapons. General MacArthur’s efforts to fill out combat units included a sweep of every U.S. military nook in Japan to find general service personnel with combat experience or potential.”⁶ Volumes of information exist to describe in great detail how the Army divisions were inadequately equipped with World War II vintage weapons and ammunition that often failed to work, how the 7th Infantry Division was debilitated when almost 70 percent of its combat experienced personnel were plucked away to fill the first divisions sent to Korea, and how training areas throughout most of Japan were insufficient for occupation forces to do any real training beyond the company level. Mobilization and logistics expert, Dr. John Michael Kendall, said that in June 1950:

General MacArthur's Far East Command was in the worst condition that it had been in since the end of World War II. It consisted of four divisions, the 24th, 25th, [and] 7th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division, in Japan and one Regimental Combat Team (RCT) in Okinawa. Unfortunately, all of the divisions had demobilized their medium tank battalions because they were too heavy for the Japanese bridges. Although each had an authorized war strength of nearly 19,000 men, in June of 1950 they actually had only two-thirds of this number. Manpower cuts had forced MacArthur to reduce his infantry regiments to two battalions instead of the authorized three. Similarly, his artillery battalions had been cut to two batteries instead of the usual three. This meant that the commanders would find it difficult if not impossible to maintain a tactical reserve in combat, nor could they rotate units out of the front line to rest them in the usual way.⁷

These concerns are certainly valid and, undoubtedly, serve to justify the time historians spend talking about them. However, there is more to the story than simple equipment problems and short notice deployments.

The North Korean invasion happened with no warning and President Truman was forced to authorize General MacArthur to quickly commit two of the four divisions that were serving in an occupational role in Japan, followed by the last two within the following two months. In order of employment they were the 24th Infantry Division, the 25th Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, and the 7th Infantry Division. From the outset, it was clear that these forces were not prepared for war for four reasons.

First, under normal circumstances, American divisions each have three regiments with three battalions per regiment. When the 24th and 25th divisions were called, they only had two battalions per regiment and required augmentation from the other two divisions to bring them up to strength. In turn, replacements from the mainland of the United States were required to fill the last two divisions before they could be effectively deployed. The domino effect on unit homogeneity was negative and inevitable.

Second, and naturally, the training priorities for American occupation forces in Japan were dictated by new peacetime occupation duties. Little time was allotted for war-

tasks because the big war had just ended and most soldiers were committed to guarding gates, performing police actions, local security, and patrolling the city streets to prevent civil disturbance. These types of operations were a far cry from shooting at real people and being shot at by enemy tanks.

Third, because the Army was downsizing from nearly one-hundred World War II divisions to just ten divisions and nine separate regimental combat teams, most of the equipment was from World War II and ammunition was in very short supply, especially for occupation forces.⁸ After all, peacetime occupation forces would have no use for artillery rounds in Japan.

Fourth, the unit culture of the occupation soldiers was clearly not focused on wartime missions as the long awaited world peace was finally at hand after a long and costly world war. T. R. Fehrenbach characterizes the first American unit injected into Korea like this:

The young men of Task Force Smith carried Regular Army serial numbers, but they were the new breed of American regular, who, not liking the service, had insisted, with public support, that the Army be made as much like civilian life and home as possible. Discipline had galled them, and their congressmen had seen to it that it did not become too onerous. They had grown fat.⁹

A cursory look at casualty rates reveals an alarmingly high number of American casualties against what was purportedly a non-industrialized and inexperienced North Korean combatant. As an example, over eighty percent of the casualties that the 24th Infantry Division suffered during the entire war occurred during the first five months of action, and seven percent of those casualties were never recovered.¹⁰ And the more numerous Chinese enemy had not yet been encountered. The 24th Infantry Division was composed of active duty soldiers, many of whom were pulled from the other three

divisions stationed throughout Japan, and many of the leaders were combat veterans of World War II. So, why were the casualty rates so high and the casualty recovery rates so low? Is it attributed to poor equipment or lack of individual combat experience, or is it the fact that the units had not trained together, served together, and had time to become cohesive?

Method

Korean War casualty statistics clearly show that various ground combat units had significantly different casualty rates. These rates can be affected by friendly-enemy force ratios and tactical advantages, but the historical analysis conducted in this paper suggests that units opposing roughly similar enemies in roughly similar tactical situations do, in fact, have markedly different casualty rates that are not attributable to mere enemy numbers and disposition. An examination of how two units with different levels of cohesion act in similar situations and a comparison of their casualty rates suggest that units in similar combat situations suffer fewer casualties when their level of cohesion is high. But, what is cohesion?

In 2003, the United States Army Unit Manning Task Force described cohesion as,

The subjective knowledge and experiences gained by a group who have bonded, which allows them to operate in a more efficient and effective manner. Members of a cohesive group anticipate actions of other members or of the collective group with less need for direct communication.¹¹

Although this description describes what cohesive units do, that is “operate in a more efficient and effective manner,” it is limited in scope and neglects several characteristics that may be self-evident. Current military doctrine, like this definition, treats cohesion as a nebulous concept and does not directly define it; rather, it merely describes a number of positive, and generally subjective, circumstances that are produced by cohesive units. For

instance, gaining the subjective knowledge and experience to be able to anticipate the actions of other members is a product of a cohesive unit. But it is also true that a leader's objective decision about how to employ his force can prevent members of the group from being able to anticipate the actions of the others. This appears to be self-evident but is not part of the task force's description of cohesion.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines cohesion as “the process or condition of cohering.” In the same source, cohering is defined as, “causing to form a united or orderly whole.”¹² This definition is also nebulous, but it describes the *idea* of cohesion without either a checklist of the things that cause a whole to become united or orderly or a detailed listing of the characteristics that a “united or orderly whole” would possess. If it had such lists it would be too lengthy to be understood and too specific to be applied without infinite revisions.

The ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, defined an ideally perfect circle simply as an infinite number of points equidistant from a single point. In spite of the geometrical counter-arguments to this definition people just do not argue about its practical elements. To do so would be futile. Plato postulated that although the concept of this ideal circle could be imagined in a man's mind, it is not something that one can point to and say, “there is one.” Imagining the nebulous concept of the ideally perfect circle in one's mind and pointing to close replicas is all that will ever be achieved—it is still useful. This philosophy can be applied to cohesion. Cohesion is not a specific set of characteristics that can be applied as a template to a unit or team. Units can be built and people can be trained, but, although an ideally perfect cohesive unit can be imagined, one will never be able to point to and say, “there is one.” Imagining the nebulous concept of an ideally

cohesive unit in one's mind and pointing to close replicas is all that will ever be achieved—it is still useful.

In spite of this, the application of the characteristics of cohesion is a friendly endeavor. People tend to define cohesion either as a broad concept like the dictionary definition above, or they simply list a bunch of specific characteristics and include a disclaimer that some were probably forgotten. It appears that universal characteristics, such as dedication to a collective effort, effective communication, commitment to competence, shared common goals, efficient coordination, and some form of emotional attachment, are commonly agreed upon, and are perhaps even self-evident. And there are few, if any, circumstances where one disagrees with another's nesting of additional characteristics in their *idea* of cohesion. Cohesion, although nebulous, is almost self-evident and people just do not argue about its practical elements. To do so would be futile.

In light of this, no unit could, at a given point in time, exhibit every characteristic of cohesion imaginable, especially as people come and go during normal rotation and replacement cycles. New personalities, skills, and intellects are constantly being gained and lost and situations are constantly changing. So, beyond the question of what the definition of cohesion is, when does one know whether a unit is cohesive and whether they will operate more efficiently and effectively? Without getting into a “chicken and the egg” debate, the best that can be said is, just like the ideally perfect circle, a unit may look like a cohesive unit, but it is impossible to state with certainty that a unit is cohesive until it has been proven to operate efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, this measure is performed with hindsight not foresight and begins with an assessment of the unit's

performance. So, although a unit may be supposed to be cohesive prior to it conducting operations, it cannot really be known until afterwards. Additionally, in order to judge whether a unit performed more or less efficiently and effectively, it must be compared to the performance of another unit or to a different performance from the same unit. In either case, the best that can be hoped for is a conclusion that the unit was relatively more or less cohesive than the unit it was compared to.

This paper will compare the performances of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division by describing the circumstances that impacted their performances, determining which unit was more cohesive, and discerning the relationship between their relative levels of cohesion on the numbers of casualties they suffered. The aim is to answer the primary questions: what are the factors that affected these two divisions' cohesion during the Korean War? Was there a relationship between their level of cohesion and their casualty rates in the first three and one-half months of the war? These questions ultimately lead to the identification of a relationship between cohesion and casualties that may very well be a basis for future studies and plans involving the formation of new units, personnel doctrine, and evaluation criteria of unit performances.

Measurable characteristics such as, but not limited to, training time and equipment status, weapons status, combat employment, unit homogeneity, and enemy disposition and strength will be discussed in detail, while the less measurable characteristics of leadership and unit culture that also encompass the inferred bonding between men who have professionally served together, shared hardships, and spent personal time together are addressed in less detail. Sergeant Alvin C. York, Medal of Honor winner in World War I, described this bonding as follows: "War brings out the

worst in you. It turns you into a mad, fighting animal, but it also brings out something else, something I just don't know how to describe, a sort of tenderness and love for the fellow fighting with you.”¹³

Training time is simply a measure of time spent training units on their combat tasks. It encompasses the echelon of training, i.e., company, battalion, regiment, division, and the amount of time a unit spent focusing on tasks and operations that are to be performed in war. It also includes a discussion of how the divisions initially filled their personnel requirements through the reserve and selective service programs. Equipment status considers the condition and type of equipment forces deployed with and had available.

Combat employment is a discussion of places and times that units were actually conducting combat operations and the level of experience unit members gained in actual combat situations. In the case of the Korean War, however, it must also consider individuals' sense of history felt as a result of the overall success in World War II. The veterans' experiences and reflections on the successes that came from victories over Germany and Japan undoubtedly strengthened the driving powers of optimism and individual will power within units, and the percentage of these veterans in units is directly proportionate to the level of positive impact of these qualities.

Homogeneity is defined as a unit's likeness among its members—likeness such as ethnicity, background, and the common history discussed in the previous paragraph, either militarily or culturally. Various accounts of homogeneity are found in the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army (KATUSA) program or the 25th Infantry Division's all-black 24th Infantry Regiment.

Enemy disposition and strength is relevant in that some enemy units were also more experienced and cohesive than others. Discussing of enemy attributes and equipment is critical to understanding the context of the situation in which American units found themselves. Although the enemy is not a factor in determining a unit's level of cohesion, it is certainly a factor in determining how well a unit performs relative to another during an operation, especially if the two units being compared fought enemies with different capabilities.

Leadership is the ability of a leader to impose his will on his unit and is manifest in the concept of discipline. That is, does a unit do what the leader wants it to do? And, does the leader control his forces and create the operational conditions for them to fight as a cohesive body? It also considers the supposition that a unit takes on the personality of its leader, good or bad.

Culture is the atmosphere within a unit that leads soldiers to want to fight in the spirit of, and for the honor and protection of, his comrades or unit. Many stories have been told and many Medals of Honor given to men because of a soldier's ability to inspire his unit to overcome significant odds and achieve victory, e.g. Sergeant York. These subjective relationships are more human than mechanical and will be referred to according to personal accounts or as made appropriate by specific sources.

Although it is not possible to define cohesiveness as an *absolute* truth, it is possible to compare units' circumstances and postulate whether one was more cohesive than another, and then examine whether or not their assumed levels of cohesion contributed to their relative success or failure. For example, initially the 25th Infantry Division could not have been as cohesive as the 1st Marine Division because the 25th had

seventy percent of its veteran leadership stripped from it just prior to combat in order to fill the 24th Infantry Division for its deployment. Relative to these two units, the 25th had less combat training time as a unit, no time in combat, limited individual and unit competence in conducting combat operations, and its men generally did not share a common unit history, especially with the significant number of Korean augmentees. On the other hand, the 1st Marine Division went into battle as a relatively intact unit, had enjoyed relatively abundant combat training time prior to deployment, had maintained much of its World War II veteran leadership, and was primarily homogeneous simply because it was one of only two Marine Divisions in the American military at the time. Comparing the performances of such different units will lead to an identification of the relationship between cohesion and casualty rates.

Chapter 2 will flesh out the elements of cohesion and draw inferences based on an analysis of the 1st Marine and the 7th Infantry Divisions prior to their deployment and the mobilization and replacement system that sustained them through their first three and one-half months of combat. These two units were selected based on the great differences between them. On the one hand, the 1st Marine Division was involved in unit training at American installations that were resourced for large scale maneuvers, was composed entirely of Marines, and was employed with primarily the same Marines that were involved in the unit's pre-war training. On the other hand, the 7th Infantry Division was performing occupation duties in Japan that offered very little training for anything above battalion level maneuvers, was composed of sixty percent American soldiers and forty percent KATUSAs who barely spoke English, and lost fifty percent of its strength, including seventy percent of its combat experienced personnel, a little over one month

prior to deployment. The time units had to train on basic and specific operational tasks prior to combat and where the filler and replacement personnel came from will be important to understanding the mindset of soldiers and the condition of the units as they entered the fight.

Chapter 3 will address leadership, equipment, and enemy forces. The two divisions' leadership and equipment used in their first two campaigns of the war, the relative enemy strength and disposition, and the similarities in enemy situations between the units set the stage for a discussion of how cohesion might be related to casualty rates. At the end of this chapter, the reader will have a comprehensive understanding of the similarities and differences of the two units and the enemy that they faced during their fighting.

Chapter 4 is the culmination of the thesis. It will present casualty rates for the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions at critical points from 15 September to 10 December 1950 and compare their casualty rates and their relative levels of cohesion. When possible, it will point to specific characteristics of cohesion that led to the particular casualty circumstance.

Application

History, as a discipline, teaches us to learn more about the past in order to adapt or apply the principles that succeeded or failed to current changing situations. It is important to understand the lessons drawn from a study of the relationship between unit cohesion and casualty and casualty recovery rates in order to prevent making the same mistakes in today's military, which is amazingly similar to that of the Korean War era.

In 1950, the defense budget and manning system was dominated by actual and potential conflicts in one region of the world—Europe. The strategic desire was to deny Soviet domination of Europe and the spread of communism. In 2004, the defense budget and manning system is dominated by actual and potential conflicts in one region of the world—the Middle East. The strategic desire is to deny the spread of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. In 1950, America had obligations to occupy and enforce peace in areas of the world that were destabilized as a result of military defeat—Japan and Korea. In 2004, America has obligations to occupy and enforce peace in areas of the world that are destabilized as a result of military defeat—the former Yugoslavia and Iraq. In 1950, America was involved in a theater war that relied heavily on joint and combined warfare—Korea. In 2004, America is involved in a theater war that relies heavily on joint and combined warfare—Iraq and Afghanistan. In 1950, America became increasingly reliant on reserve forces to execute War Department requirements. In 2004, America is even more reliant on reserve forces to execute Defense Department requirements.

It is clear that history does repeat itself and only a study of the past is likely to prevent the repeat of mistakes that have been made. In 1953, a long and costly war ended with an armistice after thousands of dead and wounded had been sacrificed for what amounted to simply a reestablishment of the status quo. Will today's war against terrorism be just as costly? Will the sacrificial means be justified by whatever the end result might be? What is the end that is sought in the war on terror and will a return to the status quo be sufficient justification to stop the war? The United States could not stomach prolonging the war against its communist enemy of 1950 to 1953 as the casualties had

become too high of a price to pay for what seemed to be too little return. Will Americans be able to stomach the price in casualties in the war on terror in the Middle East?

Relationships that existed in the Korean War are still valid today—the level of unit cohesion determines how many will or will not die along the path to victory. After a complete study of the relationship, the reader will be better armed to address the current Army’s need to build units under concepts like the Unit Manning System (UMS), which is specifically designed to decrease personnel turbulence in MTOE units and set the conditions for increased cohesion; develop and implement reserve mobilization and personnel replacement doctrine; and understand the dynamics that affect unit performance during training and combat operations.¹⁴ Cohesion also impacts the conduct of joint operations and the estimation of the post-conflict casualty recovery efforts.

¹Roy E. Appleman, “South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950.” (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986), 605.

²Michael J. Varhola, “Fire and Ice, The Korean War, 1950-1953.” (Da Capo Press, 2000), 275.

³T. R. Fehrenbach, “This Kind of War.” (New York: Macmillan, 1963; reprint, Washington D.C.: Brassey’s, Inc., 2000), 10-12 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴James, F. Schnabel, “*Ridgway in Korea.*” *Military Review* (March 1964): 3-13 (Italics added)

⁵Letter, Gen Almond to Gen Ridgway, 25 January 1951, in Billy C. Mossman, “Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951.” (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 226.

⁶Terrence J. Gough, “U.S. Army Mobilization and Logistics in the Korean War: A Research Approach.” (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 25.

⁷John Michael Kendall, “An Inflexible Response: United States Army Manpower Mobilization Policies, 1945-1957.” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1982), 164-65, in Terrence J. Gough, “U.S. Army Mobilization and Logistics in the Korean War: A Research Approach,” 25.

⁸Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, 49-50.

⁹Fehrenbach, 66.

¹⁰Individual Deceased Personnel Files and Field Search Case Files [collection of individual files for all missing Americans servicemen from the Korean War and the documents that accompanied the search and recovery effort]; available from the American Army Central Identification Laboratory, J2 Records Room.

¹¹“Task Force Stabilization Terms and Definitions” available from https://www.unitmanning.army.mil/Products_items/termdefinitions6.hmt (accessed on 29 September 2003).

¹²William Morris, ed., “The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language” (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.), 259.

¹³“FM 22-100, Army Leadership” (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1999), 5-22.

¹⁴“Task Force Stabilization Terms and Definitions.”

CHAPTER 2

PREPARED FOR BATTLE?

Scope and Background

The focus of the study and analysis for this paper is on the Army and Marine infantry regiments from two division-sized units that seem to be polar opposites in terms of cohesion: the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these two units could not have had more opposite experiences in the period just prior to their employment in the war. And as a matter of natural simplicity, these two units were employed in largely the same areas at roughly the same time against almost the same composition of enemy forces. This chapter will analyze each unit in specific areas and juxtapose them by their characteristics of cohesion prior to conducting combat operations.

Shortly after North Korea's invasion of South Korea, on 29 June 1950, General MacArthur flew to the front to make a first hand inspection of conditions. He concluded that, "air and naval action alone could not be decisive, and that nothing short of intervention of US ground forces could give any assurance of stopping the Communists and of later regaining the lost ground."¹

The next day he ordered the Eighth Army to send the 24th Infantry Division to Korea immediately. Probably due to his great successes in the Pacific theater during World War II, General MacArthur also began envisioning an amphibious operation as key to defeating the invasion. However, in order for an amphibious attack to succeed, he needed units that were skilled in the operation. This turned his interest to the Marine Corps. General MacArthur wanted an entire Marine division to execute his amphibious

landing plan, but after being briefed by Admiral Charles Turner Joy, the Commander of Naval Forces in the Far East, that there were not enough active duty Marines yet, he temporarily settled for a reinforced regiment.

On 7 July 1950, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, the Chief of Naval Operations, activated the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade for use in Korea. The brigade consisted of the 5th Marine Regiment, under the command of Lt. Col. Raymond L. Murray, plus a brigade headquarters group. The Regiment only had two rifle companies and one heavy weapons company per battalion, but most of their officers and about 65 percent of the noncommissioned officers were combat veterans of World War II.² To General MacArthur the Marine brigade represented the first piece of the ambitious amphibious landing plan to cut the enemy's supply lines, since it was becoming clear that the mobilization timeline of Army units alone was only sufficient to delay, but not stop, the complete annihilation of UN forces in South Korea. The 24th Infantry Division was already committed to the fight, the 25th Infantry Division was preparing for deployment from Japan, and the 2nd Infantry Division was being alerted for deployment from the United States.

General MacArthur's amphibious operation initially included a Marine division and elements of the 1st Cavalry Division. But, as it became more pressing to provide troops to the defense of Pusan, the 1st Cavalry and the Marine Brigade were drawn into counter attack plans around the ever-shrinking defensive perimeter. By the end of July 1950, the entire cavalry division would be committed through P'ohang-dong along the Taejon-Taegu corridor in support of the 24th Division, leaving only the Far East reserve, the 7th Infantry Division in Japan, for General MacArthur's amphibious assault plans.

And much like the 24th and 25th Divisions, the 7th Infantry Division was understrength, having only two of three battalions in each regiment. The division was further weakened when men were pulled out by Eighth Army to serve as individual fillers and replacements to fill the previously deployed divisions.³

On 14 July 1950, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade embarked from southern California for the long trip across the Pacific Ocean to Japan. Midway through the trip, Far East Command (FECOM) ordered the brigade, under the command of Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, to bypass Japan and proceed directly to Pusan to be attached to the 25th Infantry Division and employed against enemy forces south of Pusan near Masan. This temporarily suspended its ability to contribute to any amphibious assault plan. The 4,713-man brigade debarked at the Pusan port on 2 August and four days later was attached to the 25th Infantry.⁴ Although American forces were becoming more successful at conducting local counter attacks, General MacArthur was still convinced that an amphibious landing was the only hope the UN had of defeating the North Koreans in total. An amphibious landing required the experience and expertise of the United States Marines.

In early July, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commanding General of the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF), had urged General MacArthur to ask Washington for the assignment of the entire 1st Marine Division with air support (almost 25,000 men).⁵ General MacArthur's desire was for a division to be ready to conduct an amphibious assault no later than 15 September. Shepherd thought that this was possible, especially if the brigade, which was already headed for Korea could be relieved from the Pusan defense plan and become one of the three regiments. General MacArthur immediately

made the request to Washington, but it was not until after his second request a week later that approval was granted and Major General Oliver P. Smith was named as commander. On 25 July the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directed the Marine Corps to build up the 1st Marine Division to full war strength and allocate it to the FEC. It was to depart Camp Pendleton between 10 and 15 August.⁶ General Smith had less than sixty days to create an entire division out of what was little more than a regimental combat team. The Marine Corps Reserve would be called upon and it would be ready.

The Marine Division Forms

Prior to the ordering the bringing of the 1st Marine Division to full strength, a detailed examination of the state of the Marine Corps was conducted to determine the feasibility of such an endeavor. There were only 3,386 officers and men remaining at the Camp Pendleton, California, home of the 1st Marine Division, compared to 7,789 men prior to the deployment of the 1st Provisional Brigade.⁷ The division would need to integrate nearly 20,000 marines into the division to bring it up to wartime strength. Additionally, the Marines would need to raise hundreds of additional cadre to train and select those who would make the final cut.

Table 1 shows that the entire Marine Corps had just over 74,000 Marines on active duty as of 30 June 1950. Of these, fifty-four percent of the Marines were performing assigned missions in the Operating Force, that is, the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) Pacific and Atlantic, security detachments, and forces afloat. The remaining forty-six percent were serving in other capacities, to include administrative and supply jobs, on special assignments, or were not available due to hospitalization, confinement, or moves between units. The FMF Pacific was comprised of the 1st Marine Division (including the

4,700-man Provisional Brigade) and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW). The FMF Atlantic had the 2nd Marine Division and 2nd MAW. The request made by General MacArthur still required a Marine division to be allocated to him before 15 September but the Marine Corps was unwilling to create a division on the fly and insisted on time to mobilize and prepare trained and ready men.⁸

Table 1. Marines on Active Duty, 30 June 1950	
Operating Force	
Fleet Marine Force	
Pacific	
1st Marine Division	7,779
1st Marine Aircraft Wing	3,733
Atlantic	
2nd Marine Division	8,973
2nd Marine Aircraft Wing	5,297
Other	1,921
Total Fleet Marine Forces	27,703 ⁹
Security Detachments	11,087 ¹⁰
Afloat	1,574 ¹¹
Total Operating Forces	40,364
Other Forces	33,915
Total on Active Duty	74,279

Source: Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 20.

The Provisional Marine Brigade

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade had been activated with just over 5,000 officers and enlisted men.¹² The sixty-eight percent strength 5th Marine Regiment, with 2,643 out of the 3,902 authorized personnel, comprised the main body of the Brigade and was the only regimental element of the 1st Marine Division at the time. Also, like most other units suffering from the post-World War II draw down, each battalion in the 5th Marine Regiment had only two of the authorized three rifle companies and a heavy weapons company. But, the regiment also had the Brigade headquarters group and three squadrons of aviation support attached. The dispatch of the 5th Marine Regiment was

quick despite being unforeseen, but the Marine Corps was proving that it had a penchant for being trained and ready for combat.

The newly formed brigade had a base of training because the 1st Marine Division participated in several major training exercises from October of 1949 to June of 1950, as shown in Table 2. In addition to these major exercises, the division had participated in a smaller training exercise almost every month plus a myriad of air-ground exercises and command post exercises that included counterparts from the Marine Air Wing (MAW) and the 2nd Marine Division of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina¹³:

Table 2. Marine Training Prior to 25 June 1950	
Oct 1949	Air lift field exercise involving moving a reinforced battalion and air command.
Nov 1949	Field exercise involving a reinforced regiment and supporting aircraft.
Dec 1949	Combined field exercise—a simulated amphibious assault involving the entire Division.
Jan 1950	Division elements in Operation MICOWEX stressing amphibious operations.
Feb 1950	Field exercise involving a reinforced regiment and supporting aircraft.
Mar 1950	Land plane and seaplane airlift exercise involving seizure of San Nicholas Island by a reinforced battalion and a Marine air command.
May 1950	Participation by most of the Division and Air Wing in Demon III, an amphibious demonstration.
Jun 1950	Continuation of training in problems, field exercises, and command post exercises.

Source: Montross, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, 19.

Other elements of the brigade were divisional service and support troops and FMF troops that provided primarily amphibious transportation and air observation support.¹⁴

Additional officers and men from three squadrons of Marine Air Group 33 deployed to provide close air support to their Marine component.¹⁵

All in all, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was as ready, if not more so, than any Army divisional unit sent to Korea from Japan. Personnel were active-duty at the same station and had practiced in multiple training exercises prior to deployment. The men were experienced in combat and their employment in the Pusan perimeter was welcome relief to the Army soldiers who did not share the same advantage.

The 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Regiment

After the initial launching of the Provisional Marine Brigade, the next immediate hurdle was to form two more regiments to complete the division. This endeavor, however, relied on a careful prioritization of the peacetime requirements and the mobilization capabilities of the reserve forces. The 1st Marine Division formed from four types of personnel¹⁶: 1) Brigade units already in Korea combined with elements to be activated; 2) elements from the 2nd Marine Division sent from Camp Lejeune to augment the 1st Division; 3) active duty personnel released from other posts and stations; and 4) Marine Corps Reserve personnel who met minimum combat experience requirements. The Marine Corps had been careful about maintaining a ready and trained reserve since the end of World War II, hence, they had required those personnel serving in the supporting establishment and on special assignment to conduct annual weapons and individual training to maintain their readiness. Additionally, the normal rotational policy swapped personnel regularly between the FMF and these special duties.¹⁷ The result was that all Marines remained trained on wartime tasks even while they were not in the Operating Forces.

Within hours of President Truman's authorization to mobilize the reserves, rigorous planning began to form the second regiment of the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Marine Regiment. Marine Corps Headquarters sent a warning order to Reserve Districts that reservists would soon be ordered to active duty and they notified Camps Pendleton and Lejeune to expect a combined 27,000 recently activated Marines from the Organized Reserve. They also instituted what is known today as stop-loss and ordered twenty-two reserve units to duty within ten days. To highlight the seriousness of the effort, the CNO

authorized a fifty percent reduction in security forces within the continental United States, thereby freeing 3,630 additional active duty Marines for addition to the force already mustering at Camp Pendleton.¹⁸

Although there was no assurance that the mobilization could be completed according to General MacArthur's timeline, the ball was rolling. General Smith took command of the Division and was officially ordered to build the division up to full strength. Congress passed legislation authorizing President Truman to extend enlistments one year for active and reserve Marines, thus making a host of able bodies available to commanders attempting this tremendous feat.¹⁹ As shown in Table 3, the first troops to begin the build up arrived at Camp Pendleton on 31 July, and within a week over 13,000 Marines were added to the 3,459 Marines remaining at Camp Pendleton after the dispatch of the 1st provisional Marine Brigade.

Table 3. Marine Buildup in the Beginning of August 1950	
Marines remaining at Camp Pendleton after the dispatch of the Provisional Brigade	3,459
Marines reporting from other posts 31 July through 4 August	3,630
Marines reporting from the 2nd Marine Division from 3 to 6 August	7,182
Marines selected as combat ready out of the reservists reporting by 7 August	2,891
Total	17,162

Source: Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 24.

At the time, a full Marine Division (less aviation support) with three infantry regiments was authorized 22,343 total troops.²⁰ The 1st Provisional Brigade sailed to Korea under strength by 1,259 Marines in the 5th Marine Regiment. With the Joint Chiefs' of Staff authorization of General MacArthur's request for an entire division, planners now had approximately twenty days to integrate over 17,500 additional Marines into the Division, not counting training cadre performing duties at Camp Pendleton and future individual replacements. Meeting this requirement would take almost the entire

active duty and Organized Reserve Marine Corps and it was apparent that future replacement and rotational personnel would have to come from the Volunteer Reserve force. More on mobilization and reserve forces will be covered later in this chapter.

To complicate matters, beginning on 3 August, after Marine engagements east of Masan, the 1st Marine Division had to send replacements to the Provisional Brigade. First, the 1st Marine Division was directed to provide ten officers and 290 enlisted to the Brigade. Then, on 23 August, ten officers and 300 enlisted were requested. Finally, there were two more requests for a total of twenty officers and 590 enlisted men to replace Marines and provide the third companies to the three battalions of the 5th Marines in the Provisional Marine Brigade.²¹ After this, the Division was deficient an additional 1,220 Marines and the continuing need for replacements would not subside.

By 9 August, the initial weeding process had been completed at Camp Pendleton and 17,000 trained and ready Marines were assigned to the 1st Marine Division.²² This was more than the minimum required to bring the two-regiment division to full strength, but still about 1,500 short of a full, three-regiment division. As the Division main body, including headquarters and support troops and the 1st Marine Regiment, loaded out for Japan from 8 to 22 August, excess personnel were integrated into depleted assignments throughout the Marine Corps, into rotated positions at posts and stations, and left in Camp Pendleton as cadre for the newly forming 7th Marine Regiment.²³

The 7th Marine Regiment

On 10 August, the 1st Marine Division was given the order to stand up the third and final reinforced regiment, the 7th Marine Regiment, and deploy it to the Far East by 3 September. Forces available for the formation are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Buildup of the 7th Marine Regiment in August 1950	
Marines of the rear echelon cadre and from posts and stations	1,109
Marines from the 2nd Marine Division	1,822
Marines from the reserves selected as combat ready	1,972
Marines of the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines in the Mediterranean	735

Source: Montross, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, 33.

Since the personnel pool for the formation of the 7th Marine Regiment coincided with the formation of the rest of the division, the availability of trained and ready Marines remained pretty much the same during both efforts. However, manpower was becoming scarcer and it became necessary to draw in the 6th Marine Regiment of the 2nd Marine Division to form the nucleus of the newest regiment. The 6th Marine Regiment was at peacetime strength with only one of its three battalions manned, and that battalion was afloat with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.²⁴ The 6th Marine Regiment, stationed at Camp Lejeune, and their battalion afloat were ordered to move to Japan by 16 August to link up with the rest of the 7th Marine Regiment that would begin sailing from California on 28 August.²⁵ By 17 September the entire 5,336-man 7th Marine Regiment was in the Far East and on 21 September began unloading at Inchon harbor behind the already employed 1st and 5th Marine Regiments. The decision was also made to schedule over a thousand Marines to remain on station at Camp Pendleton to perform rear-echelon duties.²⁶

In the end, the 22,343 Marines of the 1st Marine Division were notified, mobilized, and employed in an organized, methodical, and deliberate way. The Marine Corps enforced training standards and committed to providing forces only as far as it thought it was capable of successfully performing. The success, however, was largely

predicated on the readiness, willingness, and Marine spirit of its large reserve force.

General Smith said,

Without the reserves, the Inchon landing on September 15 would have been impossible....They needed no particular refresher course to renew the amphibious skills they had learned during World War II....Reserves were quickly integrated into the division and they all became Marines with as splendid a Marine spirit as the regulars.²⁷

The 7th Infantry Division

The 7th Infantry Division followed a contrary path to its build up. In its case, the command and control structure began intact but the division was depleted during the build up of the other occupation-force divisions. As opposed to the stateside redeployment and personnel draw down experienced by the Marine Corps after World War II, the 7th Infantry Division was sent to the south side of the 38th Parallel to perform security duties, to monitor personnel and refugee movement across the parallel, to assist the ROK military and government, and to conduct patrols against North Korean guerilla activities.²⁸ In December 1948, the 7th Infantry Division was removed from Korea to perform occupation duties on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, with the last regiment leaving South Korea on 29 June 1949.²⁹

After the North Korean attack into South Korea, General MacArthur directed Eighth Army to provide as many regiments and divisions as possible to the United Nations effort in Korea and to designate the 7th Infantry Division as the FEC reserve. In order to bring the 24th, 25th, and 1st Cavalry Divisions up to strength, over 50 percent of 7th Infantry Division personnel were transferred to those divisions. This included over 140 officers and nearly 1,500 noncommissioned officers and enlisted men. On 26 July, FEC relieved the 7th Infantry Division of all of its occupational duties in order to have it

available as a full-strength division for commitment, but by then it was 9,117 men under strength: 290 officers, 126 warrant officers, and 8,701 enlisted.³⁰ By 29 July, General MacArthur notified the Joint Chiefs and said,

In Korea the hopes that I had entertained to hold out the 1st Marine Division [Brigade] and the 2d Infantry Division for the enveloping counter blow have not yet been fulfilled and it will be necessary to commit these units to Korea on the south line rather than...their subsequent commitment along a separate axis in mid-September... I now plan to commit my sole reserve in Japan, the 7th Infantry Division, as soon as it can be brought to an approximate combat strength.”³¹

By the end of July, the full force of the stronger North Korean Army was on the line around the Pusan perimeter and an amphibious assault force was urgently needed to attack the enemy rear echelon forces. As the need for more forces became critical, the obvious reality that the replacement system from the United States and Japan would continue to be insufficient for some time became very troublesome for General MacArthur. Additionally, the mounting guerilla activity within the Pusan perimeter and the massive refugee movements that were complicating the identification of enemy actors was making it more obvious that the ROK Army must also be strengthened. Logically, the aggression needed to be stopped first and then the North Koreans needed to be pushed back out of South Korea.

The KATUSA Program

To meet these challenges a threefold program was developed to conscript South Koreans to accomplish several tasks: first, continue to fill the five existing Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) divisions; second, increase the number of ROKA divisions; third, attach South Korean recruits to American units that were struggling to get up to strength.³² The latter became known as the Korean Augmentation To the United States Army (KATUSA) program. Beginning in early August, American planners were

developing courses of action that would incorporate thousands of South Korean recruits into the American divisions with a large number of recruits going to the 7th Infantry Division, which was still in Japan.

The ROKA established the 1st Replacement Training Center in mid-July 1950, with a 10-day training cycle that trained up to 1,000 civilians daily to fill the established divisions. The graduates were green, but the large number of warm bodies was necessary to keep any hope of defeating the North Korean aggression alive. With a 15 August 1950 order from FEC to initiate the KATUSA program and a realization that Korean leadership was lacking in the newly forming units, the South Koreans opened both the 2nd Replacement Training Center for expanded recruit training and the Ground General School to train up to 250-second lieutenants per week in infantry skills.

The KATUSA program was initially intended as a strength-building force to fill the void in the American individual replacement system, pairing Korean and American soldiers in buddy teams to train and fight together. But the language barriers and severe discrepancies in training time, tactical competency, and weapons familiarization forced most American units to use their KATUSA soldiers as laborers, ammunition bearers, and the like. These hastily assigned troops were not able to quickly transition from their civilian life to the stress of rapid movements and complex military tactics demanded of them in the early stages of the war. It was obvious that many of these new recruits were snatched directly from the city streets, as very young men arrived with schoolbooks in hand; one recruit who had gone to the store to get medicine for his family still had the medicine in his possession when he arrived in Japan.³³

The first shipment of KATUSA soldiers left Pusan for the 7th Infantry Division on 16 August 1950, consisting of 313 recruits in three platoons. During the following week, up to 2,000 recruits per day arrived until a total of 8,625 Korean officers and men were distributed throughout the 7th Infantry Division at a rate of 100 per rifle company.³⁴ This huge influx, however, still only brought the Division to approximately 70 percent of its authorized war strength.

Although most units generally thought the KATUSA program to be ineffective at its inception, it was the only answer to the critical manpower needs of the time. The main arguments against the induction of the new recruits were the language barrier and the lack of training. These obvious shortfalls would take time to rectify and there was not time to do much. Understanding was required of both the Americans and the Korean augmentees as they learned to communicate and trust each other. Trust among soldiers in combat is mission-essential and time was not a luxury.

The KATUSA program was initially infected with frustration and mistrust. In spite of this, it was reasoned that four benefits could continue from such a program. First, it would reduce the required number of Americans in Korea. Second, it could provide a trained and integrated pool of replacements in the form of a unit. Third, it was good on-the-job training for Korean soldiers who would eventually serve in the ROKA. And fourth, since Koreans were not limited to short combat rotations, like Americans, they became among the most experienced soldiers in many units.³⁵

These sentiments were highlighted in a series of studies conducted during and after the war. The first and the last will be discussed here. The first study identified severe deficiencies and recommended that the KATUSA program be scrapped altogether.

The last study praised the program, saying that it did work in the long run. Since the emphasis of this paper is on combat operations from September to December 1950, only the first study is relevant to the problems with the KATUSA program that the 7th Infantry Division dealt with. However, the last study, conducted after the war had ended, must be discussed in order to negate the idea that the KATUSA program was somehow unworkable from the beginning or destined to fail. In fact, the KATUSA program was very successful after some initial modifications and after the American and Korean soldiers were given time to cohere. The following pages will begin with the last study, in order to be fair to the program, and then continue with the study that is directly relevant to the timeframe addressed in this paper.

In August 1953, the Operations Research Office (ORO) of The Johns Hopkins University conducted a post-war study entitled “The Utilization of KATUSAs.” Researchers concluded that the KATUSA program was an effective and successful program, equally enjoyed by both American and Korean soldiers. This study consisted of a series of questions that polled the observations and experiences of over 4500 American enlisted men and officers drawn from all divisions in the Eighth Army, individuals that were still in Korea, 635 former KATUSA soldiers who had been recently rotated to the ROKA, and documentary material in military headquarters in Korea, Japan, and Washington D.C. According to the study, the Korean soldiers were found to be generally stoic and somewhat lacking in initiative but had learned sufficient English and gained sufficient combat experience to anticipate courses of action, execute orders, and endure the physical and mental hardships of combat. In fact, the majority of American participants judged the Korean soldiers to be performing on par with their American

counterparts and, despite the language barrier that was still cited as the number one encumbrance to highly effective military operations, said some Koreans were good enough to serve as noncommissioned officers in American units.³⁶ But these conclusions did not represent the tough problems that units dealt with during 1950.

The first study, conducted prior to October 1950 by American Forces Far East historian Major William J. Fox, was entitled “KATUSA Augmentation Study.” The conclusion was that although the Korean soldiers were initially necessary to fill the units critically void of manpower, the absence of military training, lack of selectivity, and extreme want of English language skills among the recruits made the program infeasible. The 7th Infantry Division KATUSA soldiers swiped off of the streets of Pusan were only with the unit about two weeks before being committed to action.³⁷ These Korean soldiers also lacked aggressiveness, discipline, and the skills in hygiene and sanitation. The worst charge from Major Fox’s study was that American leaders were constantly forced to overexpose themselves to the enemy in order to get KATUSA soldiers to attack or prevent them from abandoning their positions at the slightest indication of enemy action.³⁸ Other issues affecting the induction of KATUSA soldiers are summed up as follows:

The inability of the Army to supply a sufficient number of translators made control of the Koreans in combat impossible. Nor could the men be adequately trained in the technical aspects of weapons and gunnery. Their habits of personal hygiene and field sanitation left a great deal to be desired by American standards. Control of discipline by the ROK Army meant undesirable delays between infractions and punishment. Used to a diet of rice, lower in calories but higher in bulk than American rations, the Koreans seemed to be complaining constantly of hunger. Diminutive in size compared to Americans, they were difficult to fit with U.S. uniforms.³⁹

As a result of this first study reflecting the deficiencies in the program, the Eighth Army G-3 recommended in October 1950 that units be allowed to continue with the KATUSA soldiers already assigned until they had no more need for them, but that no additional KATUSA soldiers be assigned to American units.

The 7th Infantry Division Embarks

As the operational situation evolved through July and a mid-September Inchon assault landing became firmly embedded in General MacArthur's mind, the replacement stream from the United States was turned fully on to the 7th Infantry Division, since it was to be the 1st Marine Division's support in the most crucial and decisive action of the war to date. From 23 August to 4 September, to the dismay of units already fighting on the peninsula, the 7th received every incoming infantry and artillery replacement soldier. The total was 390 officers and 5,400 enlisted men; many who were inactive reserves or recent inductees through the Selective Service.⁴⁰ By 11 September the division numbered 24,845 men, with KATUSA soldiers accounting for over one-third of the force.⁴¹

Prior to the 7th Infantry Division sailing from Japan for Inchon on 11 September, the training level of American soldiers who had remained in the 7th Infantry Division after the initial attrition was higher than it had been in any American unit serving on occupation duty. But the level was still far below that of the Marine Corps standard and below any reasonable standard for a unit about to be committed in a war zone. General Walker instituted a training program in the summer of 1949 that was designed to increase the readiness of troops who were serving in occupation duty over an extended period of time.⁴² Most units went through levels of training up to and including battalion, even though the limitations on training area made it impossible to conduct regimental or

higher-level training while in Japan. As a result, only about one-third of the 7th Infantry Division soldiers had been involved in battalion training operations and was familiar with individual and small unit skills and capabilities. An additional boost for the division was the veteran infantry and artillery noncommissioned officers who were sent to Japan from the infantry and artillery schools at Fort Benning and Fort Sill, respectively, to fill the critically short senior infantry and weapons leader positions that had been stripped in early July to fill up the first divisions sent to Korea. Although these new American fillers had not been in the unit long, they were at least skilled at their particular jobs.

Reserves and Mobilization: Fill and Replace

There is no doubt that the most crucial problem facing General MacArthur was manpower.⁴³ Trying to mobilize enough men to fill units initially was difficult enough, but the dilemma of maintaining that strength through initial combat operations and then building additional units to meet the increasing demand without completely depleting the General Reserve (i.e. units retained in the United States for use in general war) was great. The office of the Army Chief of Military History states the problem as follows:

First, mobilization planning in effect prior to the Korean Conflict did not envision the commitment of Army forces overseas during the first year of mobilization. This thinking eliminated the requirement for producing combat loss replacements prior to the first year of war. Allied to this was the fact that budgetary limitations imposed by Congress held the General Reserve to a pitiable understrength and left it without the means of immediate augmentation for an emergency.⁴⁴

As it became clear that the General Reserve would quickly be depleted, Congress gave authorization to President Truman to mobilize the reserve forces and draft new recruits through the selective service program. And to provide sorely needed individual replacements, the first look was at the Organized Reserve Corps—men with World War

II experience who could be quickly trained since the equipment had not changed in the five years since the end of the war.⁴⁵

Throughout World War II, the draft in the United States had provided a pool of over ten million personnel and replacements, with nearly one million of the inductees registered in the first year.⁴⁶ Within one month of the Japanese surrender, inductions dropped to about 53,000 in September of 1945 and steadily declined thereafter to a low point of only 922 registrants in August 1946, most of them volunteers.⁴⁷ In 1947, the United States Congress allowed the Selective Service Act to expire due to high volunteer rates, but it was reinstated on 24 June 1948 at the urging of President Truman because he felt that the current volunteer enlistments would be insufficient to meet potential needs during future crises.⁴⁸ Enacted for a period of two years, the Act mandated that men would serve a period of twenty-one months, with a maximum reserve obligation of five years.⁴⁹ For the next seven months regular enlistments soared in both active and reserve forces. As a result, from the first part of 1949 until the beginning of the Korean War, the Selective Service draft was placed on standby since adequate strength had been achieved and was sufficient to meet the potential needs.

After a year when no one was called by the Selective Service, public speculation was high that the 1948 Selective Service Act would again be allowed to expire at the end of its term, which was midnight of 23 June 1950.⁵⁰ However, because of the historical reliance on compulsory service and a harsh debate between the Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson and Congress, the law was fortuitously extended to 9 July 1950 pending further clarification and discussion between the Armed Services Committees in the House and Senate.⁵¹ Upon notification of the North Korean attack the next day, the debate

ceased and the law was immediately extended for one year. On 10 July 1950, the Department of Defense asked for the immediate induction of 20,000 men for delivery in September. Subsequently, the call was raised to 50,000 per month and was met and maintained through the first year of the war.⁵²

Marine Corps Reserves

The Selective Service drafted men for induction into the Army, Air Force, and Navy, but not the Marine Corps. Instead, the Marines relied on the strength of the Organized and Volunteer Reserves, along with normal accessions through the normal volunteer enlistment program, to provide their initial filler personnel and subsequent replacements. It is important to understand that the Marine Corps thinking was that Marines are special warriors who cannot just be randomly plucked from the streets. Almost contrary to rational thought, the Marine volunteer was expected to work and train hard to *earn* the opportunity to see combat. As an example of how “Marine type” men reacted to an incredible feat of arms, after the withdrawal of the 1st Marine Division from the costly campaign at the Chosin Reservoir, the number of new enlistments into the active Volunteer Reserve jumped from 877 in December 1950 to 3,477 in January 1951.⁵³

The Marine Corps Reserve was comprised of Organized Reservists and the Volunteer Reservists for a total of just over 128,000 Marines, nearly double the active duty numbers.⁵⁴ Being the first ordered to active duty, the 33,500-man Organized Reserve had to provide the immediate fillers and training cadre for the 1st Marine Division to serve in General MacArthur’s September amphibious assault.⁵⁵ This represented more than half of the Organized Reserve force. Additionally, even though building the 1st Marine Division was the priority during this time, the CNO also directed that the 2nd

Marine Division, a vital piece of the General Reserve, be brought up to full wartime strength so it would be ready and available for potential operations elsewhere in the world.

After World War II, the Marines had devoted themselves to raising and maintaining a strong and ready Organized Reserve. On the day that the Korean War began, over 2,600 regular Marines, including reservists on active duty, were dedicated to running the Organized Reserve program and ensuring quality individual and unit performances. The Marine Corps wanted a trained and ready reserve for rapid integration into the active duty force.⁵⁶ The thinking was, “when Marines were required, they were needed without delay, and they had to be of high caliber; therefore, the Marine Corps emphasis on the training and quality of its Organized Reserve could hardly be labeled an exaggeration.”⁵⁷

During the activation of the Organized Reserves, Marines were categorized into two groups, combat-ready and noncombat-ready. The first category, the combat-ready category, was composed of men who had served in the Organized Reserves for two years and had attended either one summer camp and seventy-two drills, or two summer camps and thirty-two drills. The combat-ready category also included Marines who had served on active duty in the Marine Corps for more than ninety days. From this group, approximately one-third were assigned directly to the 1st Marine Division and the remaining two-thirds were sent to posts and stations to replace active duty Marines rotating into one of the two Marine divisions. The second category, the noncombat-ready category, was composed of men that were not eligible to be classified as combat-ready due to lack of training or discrepancies and omissions in records or training documents.

These men were enrolled in basic training for use as future replacements. The Marine Corps would not assign Marines to the combat force if they did not possess a valid and verifiable proof of training readiness.⁵⁸ But, with the huge demand for forces, the Marine Corps forecasted that by mid-September the Organized Reserve would be completely depleted. Therefore, on 15 August the Volunteer Reserve, seventy-two percent of the reserve force, was activated to provide filler, replacement, and rotational personnel.⁵⁹

The Volunteer Reserve was designed “primarily for individuals that desired affiliation with the Marine Corps but whose personal activities did not permit them to participate in the more demanding Organized Reserve program.”⁶⁰ They “were important not only because of the great numbers, but because they had proved themselves to be ‘Marine type’ by all the selection methods, training, and combat tests the term implies.”⁶¹

Since it had only been five years since the close of World War II, the Marine Corps was experienced at mobilization activities and it was full of veterans from the previous war. Within the Volunteer Reserve force, about ninety-nine percent of the officers and seventy-eight percent of the enlisted men were veterans of World War II.⁶² Every member of the Volunteer Reserves had already been in the Marine Corps for combat or considerable training and was by definition considered combat-ready. Nonetheless, eight days after mobilization began, the 1st Marine Division produced Training Bulletin No. 36-50 that provided standard guidance in elementary individual and small unit training to be executed prior to deployment. But given the short reaction time, the only tasks that could readily be performed were physical conditioning and weapons test firing.⁶³ There were two major positives of these opportunities. First, the men were able to train together and familiarize themselves with the other members of the team. As

the majority of the Marine Reservists were trained during World War II, they only needed refresher training to get them back into fighting shape. Second, the Marines had a chance to sort out the weapons and equipment that worked from those that did not. Since almost all of them had been in storage since 1945, this was very important.

Because the prescient Marine Corps had an adequate reserve system, it did not induct drafted recruits through the Selective Service. But, it surely benefited from the Selective Service draft because the draft was a sort of threat to the average civilian male who was faced with the choice of either being drafted or enlisting. As a result, the Marine Corps, a proud and spirited corps, saw a large influx of enlistees that were taken through the same system of basic training and preparation for combat that any Marine would go through. And this would remain its method of obtaining and training replacements for depleted units. The Army on the other hand, with a far greater demand for replacement troops, was forced to rely on an inadequate reserve system that could only access untrained and ill-prepared reservists who were then thrown piecemeal into fighting units.

Army Reserves

Like the Marine Corps, the first step the Army took to fulfill the manpower requirements was to activate its Organized Reserve Corps. However, unlike the Marine Corps, the Army reserve system was in shambles after five years of neglect and budgetary constraints. In accordance with the national strategy, the Army's budgetary priority was the General Reserve. The thinking was that since millions of men were only five years removed from World War II, a large Army could be maintained at a lower cost by establishing a limited number of full-time General Reserve units and dispersing the rest of the fiscal investment across a large, part-time Organized Reserve. But, even in the

General Reserve, public and congressional support was only sufficient to provide only about two-thirds of the required personnel. It was assumed that the Organized Reserve would be able to fill these units when and if war broke out.

At the start of the Korean War, the Army required 146,000 officers and 956,000 enlisted men to be in reserve to meet wartime needs.⁶⁴ Reality was that pre-war budgetary constraints only allowed the Army to maintain up to 73,500 officers and 181,500 enlisted men, but even this level was not achieved prior to June 1950.⁶⁵ So when the calls for filler and replacement personnel came, the Army turned to the inactive reserve and the Selective Service to increase the personnel pool.

In mid-July 1950 Congress realized that the Army could not meet personnel requirements through the Organized Reserve alone and authorized the Army to recall reservists involuntarily. In the first year of the Korean War, 43,000 officers and 125,000 enlisted men were involuntarily recalled.⁶⁶ And, interestingly, it was these involuntary recalls that would see the first action in the Korean War. According to a study conducted by the Army Office of the Chief of Military History, the rationale was that since the Korean conflict was not “all-out” war, the more experienced active reservists, whose military skills were sharper and were better prepared, should be protected for any greater emergency that might arise elsewhere in the world.⁶⁷ Although it may have made sense at the time, hindsight pictures it like the coach who benches his best players during the regular season in order to protect them for the championship game. The obvious problem is that if the best players do not play in the regular season, the team will likely not even make the playoffs.

In addition to the inadequate number of available reservists, the failure of the Army to maintain the quality of its reserve force was shown in other ways. Among them were the lack of physical fitness tracking, indecisive deferment and exemption standards, inadequate mobilization infrastructure, and severe shortages of equipment. Since February 1947, the Army had not required reservists to undergo periodic physical examinations.⁶⁸ The Army had no idea who was qualified physically to meet demands. As it turned out, large numbers did not meet minimum physical standards and many more reservists than anticipated had to be called in order to fill quotas. Compounding these delays were the various attempts to standardize deferment and exemption guidelines. In cases where personnel attempted to file for a deferment based on dependants, educational status, or occupation, the Army found that personnel records were too incomplete to make informed decisions. Personnel records on officer reservists were “inadequate” and on enlisted men “virtually non-existent.”⁶⁹

As if this situation was not bad enough, the Army was derelict in maintaining a system through which reservists could be mobilized. Reserve personnel responsible for the alert, movement, and processing of personnel were “inexperienced, insufficiently trained in specialties,” and in the case of the National Guard, “unfamiliar with Army regulations and procedures.”⁷⁰ The weaknesses of military districts responsible for mobilization were as follows:

There was a general lack of supply, maintenance, [and] technical manuals, regulations, and forms...Supply channels for clothing and housekeeping items badly needed in the shakedown period did not function adequately for nearly two months after units arrived at training stations. Advance parties sent by divisions to training posts did not include sufficient service troops to prepare ration breakdown, communications, medical facilities, construction, and maintenance shops.⁷¹

When training began, it was hampered by shortages of equipment. Although equipment was short everywhere due to the increase in Army activity worldwide, it was most short in recalled reserve units. The most common shortages were vehicles, weapons, and engineering, communications, and maintenance equipment. The answer, as the Army saw it, was to issue a full complement of small arms, medical supplies, and individual clothing and equipment to all units. As TOE units were activated, they would receive thirty percent of their authorized organizational equipment, followed by an increase to fifty percent after four months of training. Complete allowances would not occur until a unit was notified to go overseas.⁷² But, without the equipment, units could not be adequately trained.

The Army mobilization of its reserves was problematic to say the least. The induction programs were late in coming, inadequately staffed and resourced, and, in the end, unit efficiency suffered. “The reserve component also had to deal with a diminution of unit integrity...this was a difficulty particularly for...units, activated in the first wave of recalls, that lacked the time to achieve a cohesive unit identity or undergo a balanced training program.”⁷³

With the Army mobilizing its reserves stateside, the Far East Command was busy developing a method to integrate replacements into the fighting units. It established rudimentary replacement training centers in Yokohama and Sasebo, Japan, as well as Pusan, South Korea, designed to rapidly integrate reservists shipped directly from the United States during the initial build up of Eighth Army in Korea and the 7th Infantry Division in Japan. The Office of the Chief of Field Army Forces agreed to the proposal,

but required that recalled reservists first receive three weeks of refresher training in the United States before reporting.⁷⁴

Because of the poor mobilization system in the Army, the Selective Service draftees required almost six months of processing and training before they were available to the Far East Command as replacements. To compensate for the long period, basic training was cut from fourteen to six weeks and may have “resulted in poorly trained troops and consequently greater casualties.”⁷⁵ Through March 1951, Far East Command complained of inadequate numbers of troops and, more importantly, of the poor quality of replacements that it did get. Among the most prevalent complaints was the poor physical condition of troops, which caused them to be unable to perform the strenuous duties required in the rugged Korean terrain.⁷⁶ And the quality of draftee readiness and training remained poor through the entire war. Dr. Paul Edwards, Director of the Center for the Study of the Korean War and drafted veteran of the 7th Infantry Division in February 1953, characterized the drafted soldier as soft, immature, lazy, and non-military,

I think the Army stunk and the 7th Infantry Division was the worst. I was reading in a book that it was a myth that the troops in Japan were not well trained before they went over. I think it was wrong. They may have been well trained, but they were all so soft. I was soft....I was a lazy teenager. In basic, particularly that short of basic, which was just incredibly short, they were incredibly short of people. It was hard. I did not come out of there a taught, tan, bronze warrior. I felt like a civilian, acted like a civilian. So I don't think we were very good, quite frankly.⁷⁷

Even late in the war draftees did not get to Korea ready for combat. Dr. Edwards' description of his mobilization experience was equally alarming, especially since the programs had been in place for almost three years and should have naturally gotten better. During an oral interview with Dr. Edwards, he said that he attended six and one-half weeks of basic training and a short course of advanced infantry-armor training.

Immediately following a short, five-day leave period he, with many other draftees, boarded a transport ship and sailed for about fourteen days to Pusan, Korea. Upon debarkation at Pusan, he and his fellow soldiers boarded flatbed cattle trucks, with standing room only, and were issued their first live ammunition. They drove through the night to “God knows where,” transloaded onto a train, and finally boarded jeeps and trucks for a fifteen-minute drive. He was ordered to dismount and fall into a tent for the remainder of the night. Dr. Edwards said, “It was in the middle of nowhere. I woke up the next morning and saw about a half of a dozen tents and a bunch of 105’s (105 mm Howitzer). I had never seen a 105 in my life. I discovered I was one of them. I was artillery and that morning we took the first shelling.... I guess we were supporting the Marines.”⁷⁸

Conclusion

It is apparent that the 1st Marine and the 7th Infantry Divisions comprised two distinct organizations with very different circumstances under which they could cohere. The Marines were deliberate and methodical in the formation of their units and, throughout the interwar years, remained acutely aware of the need for a homogeneous, veteran, and experienced pool of men proven according to high training standards. Marines were all drawn from a familiar and deep pool of experience, served the same organization and shared a common history. The 7th Infantry Division, on the other hand, was hastily thrown together with little regard for training or operational knowledge. It was distinctly bi-lingual and bi-cultural and, in most cases, could hardly communicate even simple tasks to a great deal of its force. Personnel were inexperienced and in many cases simply swiped off the streets of Korea and the United States with no idea where

they were going or what they would be doing. It is clear that these circumstances would affect how these two units performed in combat and ultimately define their relative levels of cohesion.

¹Quoted from report of Chief of Staff, FECOM: LtGen Edward M. Almond (USA), "United Nations Military Operations in Korea, 29 June 1950- 31 December 1951," in Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, "US Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, vol. II, The Inchon-Seoul Operation" (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1955), 3.

²Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 259.

³Ibid., 196.

⁴Ibid., 264.

⁵Ibid., 10.

⁶Ibid., 23.

⁷Ibid., 18.

⁸Ernest H. Giusti. "Mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve in the Korean Conflict, 1950-1951," (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1951), 2.

⁹Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 21.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Roy E. Appleman, "South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986), 259.

¹³Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 19.

¹⁴Ibid., 303.

¹⁵Ibid., 18.

¹⁶Ibid., 23.

¹⁷Ibid., 20.

¹⁸Ibid., 22.

- ¹⁹Ibid.
- ²⁰Ibid., 303.
- ²¹Ibid., 30.
- ²²Ibid., 28.
- ²³Ibid., 33.
- ²⁴Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 491.
- ²⁵Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 303.
- ²⁶Ibid., 33-34.
- ²⁷Giusti, 16.
- ²⁸Paul C. Waring, "History of the 7th Infantry Division," (Tokyo, Japan: Dai Nippon Printing Co., LTD, 1967).
- ²⁹Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 386.
- ³⁰Ibid., 491.
- ³¹Ibid., 491.
- ³²Ibid., 384.
- ³³Ibid., 386.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵"The Utilization of KATUSAs: A Study of the Attitudes of Eighth Army Personnel Toward the KATUSA Program." prepared for Operations Research Office, The Johns Hopkins University. (New York: International Public Opinion Research, Inc., March, 1954), 5.
- ³⁶Ibid., 10.
- ³⁷Terrence J. Gough, "U.S. Army Mobilization and Logistics in the Korean War: A Research Approach." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 47
- ³⁸The Utilization of KATUSAs, 3-4.
- ³⁹Gough, 48.

⁴⁰Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 492.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., 113.

⁴³Gough, 28.

⁴⁴Elva Stilwaugh, "Personnel Policies in the Korean Conflict." (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, n.d.), microfilm copy in the U.S. Army Center of Military History, frame 506, in Gough, 29.

⁴⁵Gough, 29.

⁴⁶Lewis B. Hershey, "Outline of Historical Background of Selective Service and Chronology" (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 12.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 14.

⁴⁹Ibid., 16.

⁵⁰Ibid., 18.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., 20.

⁵³Giusti, 36.

⁵⁴Ibid., 6.

⁵⁵Ibid., 7.

⁵⁶Giusti, 27.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 26.

⁵⁹Ibid., 25.

⁶⁰Ibid., 34.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., 25.

⁶³Ibid., 28.

⁶⁴Gough, 29.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 30.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 31.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., 34.

⁷¹Ibid., 34.

⁷²Ibid., 35.

⁷³Ibid., 36.

⁷⁴Ibid., 40-41.

⁷⁵Ibid., 41.

⁷⁶Ibid., 42.

⁷⁷Dr. Paul Edwards of the Center for the Study of the Korean War, interview by author, 12 March 2004, Independence, Missouri, tape recording, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

⁷⁸Ibid. Parenthetical comment added by author.

CHAPTER 3

ENTERING BATTLE

The previous chapter discussed the preparation for deployment and the pre-deployment status of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division. The next two chapters will discuss the performance of both divisions, as elements of the American X Corps, through their first two major campaigns of the war: the landing at Inchon and subsequent recapture of the capital city of Seoul and the attack in the northeast near the Chosin Reservoir. These divisions fought virtually side-by-side from September through December 1950 and these campaigns offer a good opportunity for comparing the two divisions' performance, evaluating their levels of cohesion relative to each other, and determining if there is a relationship between their levels of cohesion and casualty rates.

It is important to understand how external factors not commonly associated with the *idea* of cohesion, such as leadership, equipment availability, and enemy characteristics, may have affected the performance of these two divisions. What do these have to do with a study of cohesion and casualty rates? The types of weapons units carry, for instance, are not related to how cohesive a unit is or how well it performed. But when casualty numbers are compared in order to gauge that performance it would be helpful to know if the units had weapons with the same or different capabilities. For example, in this paper it would be a different study if the 1st Marines had machine guns, the 7th Infantry had slingshots, and the communists had the same variation among its forces.

This chapter will analyze the senior leadership that affected both divisions throughout each of these major campaigns, the equipment available to both American and communist forces, and enemy characteristics, disposition, and strength. After a thorough

study of these factors it will be clear that, although there were differences between units, these differences did not affect either American division more than the other. This analysis will validate the comparison of casualty rates in the following chapter.

Leadership

This section will cover the key leadership that affected the two divisions during the first year of the Korean War. Compared to other major conflicts in American history, the Korean War is unique in that most senior leadership, both active duty and reserve forces, had some form of combat experience, since the last war was only five years removed. And much of the combat experience, and a great deal of political experience, was most recently gained during operations in the Pacific Theater, since operations against Japan were the focus during the closing months of World War II.

At the very top of the leadership chain were the Commander in Chief, President of the United States Harry S. Truman, and Far East Commander General Douglas MacArthur. Truman designated General MacArthur as the Commander of United Nations forces and authorized him to take escalating actions to defeat the North Korean invasion. In spite of the strategic personnel and equipment shortages that were present as a result of the post World War II draw down, both understood the requirements for building up forces and they attempted to provide the Marine and Army commanders with the necessary resources to conduct their operations. Even though the Strategic Reserve remained a priority in terms of personnel assignments, Truman provided an extension of the Selective Service and the authorization to mobilize reserve forces in order to meet General MacArthur's requirements. These two actions were absolutely necessary for the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division to get up to wartime strength. General

MacArthur, in turn, authorized the initiation of the KATUSA program that, regardless of the negative consequences that can be seen in hindsight, was an attempt to bring the 7th Infantry Division, along with many other units, to wartime strength.

General MacArthur initially met all of Truman's military expectations even though, as the situation evolved, Truman began to worry that further military action might escalate into Soviet and full-fledged Chinese involvement. Truman's containment policy toward the communists frustrated General MacArthur's plans of decisive battle north of the parallel and into China during the latter part of 1951, but the effect of this political wrangling on the two fighting divisions within X Corps during the first two campaigns is insignificant, or at least outside the scope of this paper.

General MacArthur was a renowned personality who is, arguably, singly responsible for the operational success of the United Nations. At the beginning of the war, General MacArthur was seventy years old and had served in the military for over forty years. He was extremely experienced, confident, and competent in combat operations and knew Far East politics perhaps better than any other military leader of his time. His military success was due largely to his ability to find the enemy's center of gravity and his willingness to do anything to destroy it.

In General MacArthur's eyes, war was a jihad that should be fought in an environment free from political concern.¹ There was no such thing as limited war, and certainly, a policy of containment did not satisfy General MacArthur's philosophy. His influence on subordinate leaders and operations was directive, energetic, and principled on the destruction of the enemy, all of the enemy, rapidly and decisively. He fostered a can-do spirit where leaders led from the front and subordinates executed violently and

deliberately. No evidence has been found to suggest that General MacArthur made any decisions that would have unfairly favored either division during the war.

General MacArthur designated Major General Edward M. (Ned) Almond on 26 August 1950 as commander of an independent X Corps, working directly under FECOM instead of being subordinated to an Army. This corps was formed specifically to conduct the Inchon landing. General Almond was fifty-eight years old and had served at various levels in divisions and corps during World Wars I and II, most notably in command of the 92nd Infantry Division (the only “black” division in the United States Army) during the Italian campaign.² Prior to and during service as the X Corps Commander, he served as General MacArthur’s Chief of Staff and they shared a very close personal relationship.

Noted historian Roy Appleman describes General Almond as:

A man both feared and obeyed throughout the Far East Command. Possessed of a driving energy and a consuming impatience with incompetence, he expected the same degree of devotion to duty and hard work that he exacted from himself. No one who ever saw him would be likely to forget the lightning that flashed from his blue eyes. To his commander, General MacArthur, he was wholly loyal. He never hesitated before difficulties.³

Although General Almond’s personality was definitively military, the critic would say that he lacked a sense of prudence in the execution of independent military operations. Among the many episodes of breakdowns between General Almond and his subordinate commanders was the quarreling that occurred between him and the Marine Division commander, Major General Oliver P. Smith. The conflicts were primarily focused on planning considerations for the amphibious landings at Inchon and Wonson and, later, the speed of desired execution in the race for the Yalu during the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Since X Corps and General Almond were not even designated until 26 August and possessed neither a complete staff nor experience in amphibious

operations, General Smith and the Marines did the majority of the planning for the Inchon invasion. But once General Almond took command of the operation, he overshadowed it with his decisive personality and drove it at his own pace. General Smith thought that a deliberate tempo would be best to achieve success, but General Almond wanted speed. In true military fashion, General Almond won the arguments, but with those wins came proportionate losses of personal respect from his most experienced subordinate.

Reports exist that magnify both units' irritation at General Almond's meddling and blame his reckless decision-making on a blind obedience to his friend and boss General MacArthur.⁴ One such report from the 7th Infantry Division G3 said, "We planned an orderly concentration and movement to Chosin, by first concentrating the regiments and moving them one by one...[but] this plan was never carried out. Before we knew it, General Almond ordered our closest battalions and smaller units to Chosin, individually, and as fast as they could get there."⁵ As a result, "The underestimation of CCF strength and the rush to launch the X Corps offensive per schedule on November 27 had led to an ill-advised thinning out of American forces on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir."⁶ In another account of General Almond's blind reliance on General MacArthur, historian Richard Stewart characterizes General Almond's tendency to execute without regard to prudence,

When asked about his perceptions and decisions twenty years later, General Almond stated quite clearly that he had received his marching orders from General MacArthur to determine enemy strength in the area from Hungnam to the Yalu. He was determined to perform that mission until given other orders by MacArthur. Almond stated, "I was concerned with the immediate operations and operated under the orders that were at hand." Nevertheless, this explanation overlooks a commander's responsibility to remain independent in attitude and to

rely on his own perceptions of the situation and the ground under his direct observation. Obviously, this was not the creed of Ned Almond.⁷

Throughout the two campaigns, it is clear that General Almond's aggressive and forceful personality was a driving factor for X Corps. History will remember him as the Corps commander that executed one of most successful amphibious landings ever at Inchon. But, although he was the commander responsible for one of the largest evacuation operations in American history, he is also remembered by many for his micro meddling and his refusal to slow the Chosin Reservoir attack, even after reports from his subordinates suggested a stronger enemy force than was in the plan. General Almond's impetuosity during the Chosin Reservoir battle could account for the serious breakdown in the 7th Infantry Division's cohesion amid underestimated enemy forces, ultimately resulting in a large number of unnecessary casualties.

General Smith was fifty-seven years old at the start of the Korean War and was in his thirty-third year of military service with the Marines Corps. General Smith had served on Guam during World War I, had commanded a battalion of Marines in Iceland, and had led a Marine regiment at Talasea and in the Peleliu operation during World War II. General Smith's final job prior to the end of World War II was deputy chief of staff for the 10th United States Army for the invasion of Okinawa.⁸ He was an experienced Marine who understood amphibious operations, knew how to fight in untenable situations, and was intimately familiar with Army operations.

Since General Smith was a Marine, he did not serve under the direct service authority of General Almond. He had an advantage over Army generals because he was able to appeal to higher authority in the Department of the Navy. This is not to say that he was insubordinate to General Almond, but it was a fact that it was difficult for a

commander of one service to relieve a subordinate commander from a different service during the execution of combat operations. General Smith knew that he was a Marine in command of Marines in Marine operations, and that General Almond would have had a very difficult time replacing him unless he was overtly disloyal or insubordinate. He walked a fine line of defiance, and maintained a distant respect for General Almond while demanding, and getting, operational control of his forces.

Major General David G. Barr, the 7th Infantry Division Commander, was commissioned in 1917 and won a Silver Star the following year from the 1st Infantry Division in France. From that time through World War II Barr served in a multitude of senior staff positions, most notably as chief of staff of Sixth Army Group in the European Theater of Operations. In the postwar years Barr moved into China as an advisor to Chiang Kai-shek and then on to replace Major General William Dean as commander of the 7th Infantry Division in Japan. Barr was considered to be a very smart and loyal staff officer with little battlefield presence and few leadership traits. Barr's G-2, John W. Paddock wrote: "I admired and respected General Barr, although he was not what I would term a combat officer or troop commander type.... He was courtly, kind, friendly, very intelligent, capable and, I think, aware of his shortcomings [as a field commander]." ⁹

Barr's assistant division commander was Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, who, according to Barr's aide Charles Davis, "did the real generaling in the division." ¹⁰

Personally, Major General Barr was a caring and thoughtful man who was well respected by his subordinates. He was up-front, honest, and supportive of both his own forces and those whom he supported tactically. He maintained a respectful working relationship with

the Marine commander and did his best to appease his boss, General Almond, in spite of General Almond's propensity to micro-manage.

The difference in command and staff thinking is a severe criticism of Major General Barr. When General Almond insisted that the two divisions move quickly and without delay, General Smith, the command-type thinker, refused to allow his boss to split his force and he moved according to his own sense of prudence. Major General Barr, the staff-type thinker, was easily overwhelmed and forced to yield to General Almond's personality. Since Barr was not as independent minded as General Smith and did not possess the savvy, or the luxury of service separation, to execute a deliberate and methodical attack in spite of his orders, his forces became disjointed and eventually cut off during the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

Leadership, although somewhat external to the men actually pulling the trigger, can have a severe impact on the performance of a unit. A unit that operates as a whole, combining the efforts of all into the efforts of one, are more efficient and effective than units that are broken into pieces and forced to act as many independent units. Although enemy forces, mistakes in navigation, etc. can break a unit into multiple pieces, these impetuses can be discounted by assuming that the cohesive unit would not fall prey to them. However, even the most cohesive unit does not stand a chance against a commander that decides for himself to disjoin the parts of his whole. In both of the first two campaigns, the Marines were under the direct control of General Smith, and were mutually supporting by his own design. On the other hand, the 7th Infantry Division only had two of its three regiments at Inchon and during the Chosin Reservoir campaign it was scattered across northeast Korea, not capable of mutual support according to General

Almond's design. The Marines remained a physically cohesive fighting force and the Army did not.

Weapons and Equipment

The weapons and equipment used during the first two campaigns differed very little between the two American divisions. But there were several notable differences in supply and technology between the American and communist forces that warrant mentioning. Allied troops were supplied with American-made World War-II vintage equipment and the communists had a hodge-podge of equally used American, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese leftovers.

Both divisions' infantry troops carried the M-1 "Garand" .30 caliber rifle as their individual weapon. With a maximum effective range of 550 meters, the Garand was a far better weapon at range than the communist individual weapon, the very rugged PPSH-41 (referred to by allied forces as the "burp gun"), which had a maximum effective range of only 150 meters. However, in the close fight the communists had a marked advantage in rate of fire, 700-900 rounds per minute, as compared to thirty rounds per minute by the M-1 Garand. But only the Garand could mount a bayonet for close hand-to-hand combat.¹¹

Machine guns, grenades, anti-tank weapons, mortars, and artillery support were evenly distributed amongst the two American divisions and were on par with the communist capabilities. The one exception is that the communist eighty-two and sixty-one millimeter mortars were one millimeter larger than the American variants, thus they could fire captured ammunition, where allied forces could not.

Americans had a marked advantage in tank support over their communist enemies. Although the North Koreans initially spearheaded their attack with the overwhelming power of the T-34 Medium Tank, it was not long until most of their tank arsenal was destroyed by allied air forces and American tanks that were deployed onto the peninsula.

Air support was one of the most notable influencing factors. Along the same lines as the tank comparison, the North Korean Air Force was quickly eliminated from being a decisive factor. The allies enjoyed air superiority throughout the two campaigns. As far as the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division were concerned, the Marines were far superior in using air support since they had their own organic air wing. However, since both divisions were under the operational control of the X Corps, Marine combat air support benefited both almost equally.

Among the most critical equipment in conducting combat operations against a formidable enemy is communications. It is the single item that has the ability to join the disjointed. S.L.A. Marshall writes, “Proper fire support and direction are among the tools which [the commander] uses in bringing about cohesion. But the fundamental means is communication—getting his men to link up by talking to one another and then sending along word of what they are doing and what they have seen.”¹² In order to conduct an operation with any coordination or exploit any success without concern for becoming over extended, it is essential that all of the pieces can talk to each other for the unit to function as a whole. Although a small unit’s internal cohesiveness is determined by the factors discussed earlier in the paper, such as homogeneity, experience, and training, large unit’s cohesion is dependant on the ability of that unit to conduct its operations as a

single entity. Much like the drastic loss of efficiency caused by members of the same unit not being able to speak the same language, catastrophic results occurred when units were unable to communicate over distances greater than those where blowing bugles, yelling, or using hand signals were sufficient.

Compared to the NKPA and Chinese People's Volunteer forces, the Americans had a marked advantage in platoon level and above communications—when they were working. In cases where radio communications were blurred or jammed, pandemonium likely ensued. NKPA and CPV units, which suffered many more casualties than did American units, only had radio communications at the levels of division and above. Subordinate units relied on buglers and couriers to coordinate their tactical orders or to conduct necessary maneuvers. Communist plans were drawn and disseminated before contact was sought, and, since the approval process for changes or adjustments was slow and cumbersome, they suffered enormous casualties. As the tactical situation developed, Communist commanders were unable to maneuver forces into positions of advantage over American units or exploit success in a timely manner. As a result, they allowed American units time to redirect fire support assets, particularly close air support, to these critical areas.

The comparison of communications equipment between the Marine Corps and the Army is quite simple. Both services used the SCR-300, also known as the “walkie-talkie,” as well as the tactical field telephone. The SCR-300 radio allowed for instantaneous communication with air, artillery, and other ground units. It was a portable, battery operated, frequency modulated (FM) radio used at platoon and higher echelon. It weighed approximately thirty-five pounds and could be carried by one man. However, it

was often ineffective in the mountainous and heavily wooded operating areas due to distance and lack of line-of-sight transmission paths. These conditions would produce garbled, jammed, and incomplete message traffic.

While the radio relied on line-of-sight, the tactical field telephone relied on wires that were run over-ground from position to position or headquarters to headquarters. This technique was most effective in static-type defensive positions, but was used to a limited degree in some offensive operations. Although it provided the most reliable method of communicating, wire was easily cut by artillery, vehicular traffic, or other events. In these instances, the alternate methods of communication ranged from courier to prearranged signals, like colored smoke or rocket burst, to simple yells and hand-arm signals across the battlefield. In the best cases, units understood the situation well enough, or had rehearsed the plan well enough, to act on their last order according to instincts bred into them during training, thus eliminating the requirement for constant communications. In these situations, units with more training would naturally have better unity of effort and would suffer less mayhem. Without direct voice communication, messages could be misinterpreted or not even heard, which significantly reduced a unit's ability to coordinate changing plans or react to changing circumstances.

The Marines enjoyed the luxury of bringing their equipment from the United States so most of it worked satisfactorily. The stocks in Japan that the 7th Infantry Division drew from were quite depleted and worn. As an example, the 24th Infantry Regiment reported that not only did they have only sixty percent of their authorized radios, but eighty percent of those were broken.¹³ Even though no records were available on the exact availability and condition of radios in the 7th Infantry Division, one can

surmise that if the first units to leave Japan faced such a situation, then the conditions faced by the last unit to leave must have been worse.

As can be seen, the differences in weapons and equipment between the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division were slight. Although the Marines had access to equipment that was in better condition, it had little, if any, effect on the relative performances of the two American divisions. The overall weapons and equipment discrepancies are more notable between the American and communist forces, but the advantages were equally shared by both American divisions. With this brief discussion, it is clear that neither the 1st Marine Division nor the 7th Infantry Division performance was affected by any remarkable equipment advantage.

Enemy Characteristics, Disposition, and Strength: The North Korean People's Army in the Inchon-Seoul Campaign

The North Korean ground forces consisted of two elements, the internal security forces and the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). The internal security forces, approximately 50,000 men, were highly political and originally formed from communist youth group members that were sympathetic to the anti-Japanese communist Korean struggle.¹⁴ In June 1950, the NKPA had an Army of approximately 135,000 Russian trained and equipped troops, organized into an Army headquarters and I and II Corps headquarters (5,000 men), seven infantry divisions (77,838 men and 30 T-34 tanks), three reserve divisions (23,000 men), a separate tank brigade (6,000 men and 120 T-34 tanks), an independent infantry regiment (3,000 men), and a motorcycle regiment (2,000 men).¹⁵ Each NKPA division had about 11,000 men and, like American divisions, was composed of three regiments, each regiment having three battalions. However, as the offense stretched south, the NKPA continued to conscript men and build units in North Korea,

particularly around Pyongyang, and also around Seoul. They were fed into the attack on Pusan via the Seoul-Osan highway. Little information can be obtained on the specifics of these newly formed units; in fact, in some cases the only evidence of their existence is contained in prisoner reports. Inexperienced and lightly armed, these forces played an important part in the defense of the NKPA rear area and lines of communication.

The Inchon invasion came as a complete surprise to the North Korean forces around the Seoul area as the Battle for the Naktong raged on to the south. As a result, the Americans found themselves fighting against an estimated 44,000 second-rate forces at Inchon. The official Marine Corps history states,

The enemy's method of operation, except for a brief determined stand near and in Seoul, consisted of moderate to strong delaying actions. The first reaction following the initial disorganization at Inchon was an attempt to contain our advance until such a time as sufficient reinforcements could arrive to warrant initiating a counteroffensive. In view of the scarcity of reinforcements and our own rapid advances, this never materialized.¹⁶

The Inchon-Seoul campaign is sub-divided into four consecutive battles: Inchon, Kimpo Airfield, Yongdungp'o, and Seoul. The following pages briefly cover the enemy aspects of each, in order. The battle for Inchon, 15 to 16 September 1950, included the 1st Marine Division seizure of the Wolmi-do isthmus, the assault on the Red and Blue Beach landing sites, and the subsequent securing of the beachhead that extended six miles inland from the landing sites. The North Koreans clearly did not consider the threat of an amphibious landing and they lost the Wolmi-do isthmus in less than eighty minutes and the entire Inchon peninsula by the next day. The Inchon defense force was comprised of approximately 2,000 men from two battalions of the newly conscripted and poorly trained 226th Independent Marine Regiment and 200 men from two companies of the 918th Coast Artillery Regiment.¹⁷ After massive American naval and air bombardment,

these soldiers were overwhelmed and appeared to have little will to fight the well organized American attackers. Barely firing a single shot, the North Koreans were killed, buried in their caves, captured, and forced to abandon most of their equipment. One representative example is contained in the following description of action in the Red Beach assault area:

The Marines moved rapidly up the incline, flushing out about a dozen Red soldiers who surrendered meekly. Gaining the summit, they drove forward and saw the entire crest suddenly come alive with infantry-crewman of the 226th NKPA Regiment's mortar company. Spiritless and dazed from the pounding by air and naval gunfire, the North Koreans to a man threw down their weapons, filed quietly from the trenches and bunkers, and marched to the base of the hill where a small detachment kept them under guard. Hardly a shot had been fired by the 2d Platoon, still without a single casualty, and the capture of Cemetery Hill had required about ten minutes.¹⁸

From 15 to 16 September the inexperienced North Koreans suffered 1,350 casualties and 300 prisoners of war.¹⁹

On 17 September, while the 5th Marine Regiment was continuing to expand its perimeter to engulf the large airfield at Kimpo, the North Koreans were attempting to reinforce the Inchon-Seoul area with elements that were otherwise desperately needed in the southern attack against UN forces at Pusan. At the Kimpo Airfield, remaining elements of the 226th Marine Regiment and the equally inept 107th NKPA Regiment were abandoned by their Regimental Commander and left completely outclassed by the American attackers. The North Korean defenders appeared to be completely surprised by the attack and by 18 September only five of them remained in combat out of the original 400.²⁰

The first real resistance offered by the North Koreans was in the battle for Yongdungp'o. While the 5th Marine Regiment continued to move toward the northern

portion of Seoul, the main part of this battle was the 1st Marine Regiment's push through Ascom City and Sosa along the Inchon-Seoul highway on 17 September, and the subsequent capture of Yongdungp'o on 22 September. Yongdungp'o was defended by experienced North Korean troops that would offer the Americans their first taste of real difficulty. The 3rd Regiment of the 9th Division, the 42nd Mechanized (Tank) Regiment, and elements of the 18th Division—the only unit of division size in the area and known as the Seoul Defense Division—were the last line of defense to prevent the Americans from crossing the Han River to Seoul.²¹ The 3rd Regiment of the 9th Division had a fighting strength of approximately 2,000 men and established its main defense within the Yongdungp'o city limits. The 42nd Regiment, with approximately 500 men and 18 T-34 tanks, and the 18th Division, with between 8,000 and 10,000 men, attempted a series of delaying actions against the 1st Marine Regiment from Ascom City, to Sosa, to Yongdungp'o, and ultimately into Seoul. However, with the 17 September loss of fourteen of its tanks outside of Ascom City, the 42nd Regiment quickly became combat ineffective. The 18th Division was the last major unit capable of inflicting any harm on the Americans.

During 19 to 21 September, as the American 5th Marine Regiment was closing in on the northern portion of Yongdungp'o and the American 1st Marine Regiment was fighting determined North Korean 18th Division forces along the Inchon-Seoul highway into Yongdungp'o, General Almond ordered the newly arrived American 31st and 32nd Infantry Regiments of the 7th Infantry Division to move south of Yongdungp'o, clear the Tongdok mountain area, and establish a blocking position across the Suwon-Seoul highway to prevent North Korean reinforcements from reaching the Seoul area. The

North Koreans attempted to reinforce the Seoul garrison with any available units, but because their focus was Pusan they could never mass enough forces to mount any substantive counterattack. In the cases where the North Koreans did get units to the area, they were employed piecemeal and suffered catastrophic losses. In the three-day battle for position the fragmented North Korean units had more than 2,550 casualties and over 800 captured.²² One unit, the North Korean 87th Regiment of the 9th Division, reportedly suffered eighty percent casualties.²³

On 21 September, the 7th Marine Regiment arrived and was ordered to move to the north of the 5th Marine Regiment and secure escape routes north of Seoul so the North Korean forces could be destroyed as they left the city. At the same time the American 7th Infantry Division was to seize Osan airbase and the southern boundary of Seoul, while the American 5th and 1st Marine Regiments crossed the Han River into Seoul. On 25 September, the North Korean western defense, held by the 4,500-man North Korean 25th Infantry Brigade, fell to the American 5th Marine Regiment after intense fighting. Captured members of the 25th Brigade reported that they had suffered forty percent casualties during the first day alone. Americans estimated that 1,750 dead North Koreans lay in their stubbornly defended positions by the end of the battle.²⁴

From 25 to 28 September the X Corps continued to clear Seoul of North Korean forces. In street-to-street fighting, the North Koreans frantically attempted to consolidate and would ultimately have to withdraw. South of the city, the American 7th Infantry Division continued to clear the Osan airbase of its occupants and destroy North Korean reinforcements attempting to counterattack from the south. To the north of Seoul, the

American 7th Marine Regiment pursued the withdrawing North Korean forces until 7 October, inflicting grave losses on them as they fled north of Uijongbu.²⁵

In the end, during the battle for Inchon and Seoul, the American X Corps had defeated the prepared defenses of over 40,000 North Korean troops who were simply unable to mount any meaningful counterattacks.²⁶ It is apparent that their failure to consider envelopment from sea made them unable to coordinate or mass their forces. And the fact that the North Koreans put all of their eggs in the Pusan basket meant that General MacArthur was proven right and, without a miracle, the North Koreans were done. The American 1st Marine Division accounted for almost 4,800 prisoners captured and inflicted over 13,600 casualties. The American 7th Infantry Division took over 1,200 prisoners and inflicted over 3,000 casualties for a total of 6,000 prisoners captured and 14,800 North Korean casualties.²⁷ The NKPA also lost a total of about sixty T-34 tanks, almost half of their entire arsenal, as well as copious numbers of mortars, antitank guns, machine guns, and rifles. As a result of the Inchon campaign, United Nations forces were able to reestablish the original border along the 38th Parallel. The X Corps would move east to begin a new drive to the north, but they would not enjoy the same success.

Enemy Characteristics, Disposition and Strength: The Chinese People's Volunteers in the Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Unlike at Inchon, the American X Corps found itself fighting against a massive and more coordinated enemy in the Chosin Reservoir area. On 8 October 1950, Chairman Mao Zedong ordered the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) to enter the Korean War:

...march speedily into Korea and join the Korean comrades in fighting the aggressors and winning a glorious victory...and strictly observe military and political discipline.... You must fully anticipate various possible and inevitable difficulties and be prepared to overcome them with great enthusiasm, courage, care, and stamina. At present, the international and domestic situation as a whole

is favorable to us, not to the aggressors. So long as you comrades are firm and brave and are good at uniting with the people there and at fighting the aggressors, final victory will be ours.²⁸

Marshal Peng Dehuai, Commander in Chief of Chinese Forces in Korea, and advanced elements of the CPV crossed the Yalu River in the west on 18 October 1950. On 25 October CPV forces defeated ROKA and US Army units in the Unsan County area.²⁹ This CPV victory was first in a series of operations that eventually led to the recapture of Seoul by communist forces. But when Peng decided to commit General Song Shilun's 9th Army Group into the Chosin Reservoir area on 5 November, winter was beginning and Chairman Mao's prediction of "possible and inevitable difficulties" could not have been more poignant. Although the American and ROKA forces would ultimately be expelled from northeast Korea, the CPV would suffer incredible losses and would prove itself to be incapable of attaining Chairman Mao's glorious victory.

The 9th Army Group of the 3rd Field Army consisted of three Armies. The 42nd Army, a leading element of the 4th Field Army, was committed to the far eastern areas of North Korea to fight against American and ROKA forces moving up the coastline. Only the 124th division of the 42nd Army, detached to provide flank protection to the Army, fought American Marine forces around Sudong as the Marines pushed from Wonson toward the Chosin Reservoir. By 2 November the 124th Division was rendered combat ineffective for the rest of the war. This encounter was among the first reports in the east of Chinese involvement in the war.³⁰

The 9th Army Group was the main antagonist to American plans in the X Corps American sector and would bear the brunt of the Chosin battle deploying its three Armies, the 20th, 27th, and 26th, in order, on a three pronged attack. First, the 20th Army

stopped the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments at Yudam-ni by sending its 89th Division to block the Marine advance west of the reservoir while the 59th Division cut the escape route to the south of Yudam-ni. While these two divisions froze the Marines in place, the 58th and 60th Divisions attacked to seize Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, respectively. Second, the 27th Army sent its 79th Division to eliminate the Marines in Yudam-ni while its 81st, 80th, and 90th Divisions attacked American 7th Infantry Division forces on the east side of the reservoir. Last, the 26th Army, the 9th Army Group reserve, would send its four divisions, the 76th, 77th, 78th, and 88th, around the east flank of the 27th Army to attack the 1st Marine Regiment at Hagaru-ri. The 78th and 88th Divisions never made it to the fight.

The CPV mission was to completely destroy American forces in the Chosin Reservoir area, before the Americans could withdraw, and then to assail the right flank of Eighth Army. But the timing was the most inopportune for the attackers. With temperatures reaching 30 to 50 degrees below zero and wind chills down to 120 degrees below zero, the CPV suffered incredible numbers of nonbattle casualties. With the additional burden of long lines of communication and short supply, the CPV fought with less than modern equipment, inadequate communications, and insufficient food supplies. Reports from prisoners confirm that combat effectiveness dwindled rapidly after the first offensive against the American forces. It seems that the CPV forces were sent into Korea with sufficient supplies only if the first attacks had succeeded.

The 20th Army began its attack on the 1st Marine Division on 22 November. The 89th Division fought with Marines first near Hagaru-ri then moved north toward Yudam-ni to prevent the Marines from moving west. By 28 November all four divisions were

committed to destroying the Marines between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri, but, because of their piecemeal employment, by 3 December all of them had become combat ineffective and were taken out of the fight. In a self-assessment, two members of the 20th Army said,

Our signal communication was not up to standard. For example, it took more than two days to receive instructions from higher level units. Rapid changes of the enemy's situation and the slow motion of our signal communication caused us to lose our opportunities in combat and made the instructions of the higher level units ineffective...³¹

We succeeded in the separation and encirclement of the enemy, but we failed to annihilate the enemy one by one. The units failed to carry out the orders of the higher echelon. For example, the failure to annihilate the enemy at Yudam-ni made it impossible to annihilate the enemy at Hagaru. The higher level units' refusal of the lower level units' suggestion of rapidly starting the combat and exterminating the enemy one by one gave the enemy a chance to break out from the encirclement.³²

Additionally, the 20th Army had a hundred deaths from tetanus caused by improper care of wounds and hundreds of others were incapacitated by typhus or ailments of malnutrition and indigestion.³³

On 27 November, General Nie Fengzhi, the 27th Army commander, committed his 79th Division, with an additional regiment of the 90th Division, to attack the Marines at Yudam-ni in support of the 20th Army while his other three divisions attacked 7th Infantry Division forces on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir. With the Yudam-ni operation failing, General Nie decided to focus his entire Army on the American 31st RCT, 7th Infantry Division. CPV soldiers assessed the 27th Army this way:

Our tactics were mechanical. We underestimated the enemy so we distributed the strength, and consequently the higher echelons were overdispersed while the lower echelon units were over concentrated. During one movement, the distance between the three leading divisions was very long, while the formations of the battalions, companies, and units of lower levels were too close, and the troops were unable to deploy. Furthermore, reconnaissance was not conducted strictly; we walked into enemy fire and suffered heavy casualties.³⁴

The troops did not have enough food, they did not have enough houses to live in, they could not stand the bitter cold, which was the reason for excessive non-combat reduction in personnel (more than 10,000 persons), the weapons were not used effectively. When the fighters bivouacked in snow covered ground during combat, their feet, socks, and hands were frozen together in one ice ball; they could not unscrew the caps on the grenades; the fuses would not ignite; the hands were not supple; the mortar tubes shrank on account of the cold; 70 per cent of the shells failed to detonate; skin from the hands was stuck on the shells and the mortar tubes.³⁵

By 2 December, the 79th Division was rendered combat ineffective by the 1st Marine Division, while on the east side of the reservoir the rest of the 27th Army was suffering heavy non-battle casualties, but continuing to pursue the 7th Infantry Division south. It seems that the high number of casualties suffered by the 27th Army was due more to their own lack of planning and sustainment, as well as the weather conditions, than to direct combat with American Army troops. CPV accounts do not attribute their failure to annihilate the American “aggressors” to heavy combat-casualties like the 20th Army, but the winter tribulations were taking their toll.

While the piecemeal attacks were taking place on the east and west sides of the reservoir and the 20th and 27th Armies were being decimated, the main objective of Hagaru-ri still remained to be seized. On 2 December, General Song Shilun ordered the 26th Army to move around the 27th Army and seize Hagaru-ri. But, again, the weather would eliminate any decisive effort and the 78th and 88th Divisions would not even show up, reportedly because they got lost in the snow. The 76th and 77th Infantry Divisions did finally make contact with the 1st Marine Division but suffered heavy losses and made little difference. Three CPV soldiers saw the situation as follows:

A shortage of transportation and escort personnel makes it impossible to accomplish the mission of supplying the troops. As a result, our soldiers frequently starve. From now on, the organization of our rear service units should be improved.³⁶

The troops were hungry. They ate cold food, and some only a few potatoes in two days. They were unable to maintain the physical strength for combat; the wounded personnel could not be evacuated...The fire power of our entire army was basically inadequate. When we used our guns there were no shells and sometimes the shells were duds.³⁷

The coordination between the enemy infantry, tanks, artillery, and airplanes is surprisingly close. Besides using heavy weapons for the depth, the enemy carries with him automatic light firearms which coordinated with rockets, launchers, and recoilless guns are disposed at the front lines. The characteristic of their deployment is to stay quietly under cover and open fire suddenly when we come to between 70 and 100 meters from them, making it difficult for our troops to deploy and thus inflicting casualties on us.³⁸

The entire 9th Army Group consisted of about 120,000 men against an American strength of less than 50,000, consisting of only the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions. Although the initial 9th Army Group attacks were successful in pinning down American forces and arresting the advance toward the Yalu, the continuation of uncoordinated attacks on the entrenched American positions cost General Song Shilun dearly in human lives and lost opportunities. The 9th Army Group suffered over 37,500 casualties from ground and air attacks. If General Song had simply bypassed the American forces in the beginning and marched on the lines of communication between Hungnam and Wonsan, or concentrated his forces on only one American position at a time, he might have achieved his objective.

¹ T.R. Fehrenbach, "This Kind of War." (New York: Macmillan, 1963. Reprint, Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's, 1994), 272.

² Harry G. Summers, Jr., "Korean War Almanac." (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 45.

³ Roy E. Appleman, "South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986), 490.

⁴ Richard W. Stewart, "Staff Operations: The X Corps in Korea, December 1950." (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1991), 3-4.

⁵Clay Blair, “The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-53.” (New York: Time Books, 1987), 420, in Stewart, 4.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Stewart, 4.

⁸Summers, 251-252.

⁹Blair, 275.

¹⁰Ibid., 276.

¹¹Michael J. Varhola, “Fire and Ice: The Korean War, 1950-1953.” (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 167, 179.

¹²S.L.A. Marshall, “Men Against Fire.” (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1947; Peter Smith, 1978), 132.

¹³Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 113.

¹⁴Ibid., 8.

¹⁵Ibid., 11.

¹⁶Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, “US Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, vol. II, The Inchon-Seoul Operation” (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1955), 325.

¹⁷Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 506.

¹⁸Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 107.

¹⁹Ibid., 333.

²⁰Ibid., 160.

²¹Ibid., 326.

²²Ibid., 333.

²³Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 519.

²⁴Ibid., 525.

²⁵Summers, 144.

²⁶Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 540.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Paul Noll, Mao's Orders the the Volunteers for Korea, available from <https://www.paulnoll.com/korea/war/mao-cal-to-arms.html> (accessed on 29September 2003).

²⁹Peng Dehuai, "Memoirs of a Chinese Marshal" (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, nd), npn.

³⁰Enemy order of battle found in Billy C. Mossman, "Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 54.

³¹Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, "US Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, vol. III, The Chosin Reservoir Campaign" (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1957), 353.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 354

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 353

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., 355.

CHAPTER 4

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

This chapter begins by reviewing and highlighting a few of the important factors discussed in earlier chapters to differentiate the 7th Infantry and 1st Marine Divisions' levels of cohesion, such as: force build up and reserve mobilization, strength and composition, and leadership. Next, it briefly recapitulates the historical American advance through the two campaigns and lays out the times and places where the American forces took significant numbers of casualties. It concludes by comparing the force ratios and casualty ratios of the two American divisions to show the relationship between their levels of cohesion and casualty rates.

The first objective of this chapter is to summarize the facts that indicate the 7th Infantry Division was less cohesive during the two campaigns than the 1st Marine Division. After establishing this foundation, the study will demonstrate that these two divisions' respective levels of cohesion are inversely related to their casualty rates. That is, units with higher levels of cohesion suffer lower casualty rates while units with lower levels of cohesion suffer higher casualty rates.

It is important to note that this endeavor is not naïve. It is nearly impossible, within the constraints of this paper, to determine the exact state of cohesion of every unit, particularly small units, by simply looking at the broad picture of circumstances and the opinions of a few people with big enough axes to grind to actually write them down. And my intention is not to discount the heroic efforts of individuals or small units that sacrificed themselves for their comrades or country. Therefore, a deliberate effort has been made to focus the research and presentation on the regimental and division levels in

order to keep from mischaracterizing those smaller units throughout the narrow scope of this paper.

It is certainly the case that many subordinate units performed outside the norm of their parent unit, but these units were the exception. They would perhaps be worthwhile individual case studies in determining how units become cohesive in spite of a dysfunctional parent unit. In fact, if subordinate units perform differently than their parent unit, the parent unit would be, by definition, a non-cohesive unit since its parts would not be performing as a whole. The remainder of this chapter will restate the facts as they have been discovered in the research and conclusions are drawn pertaining to the respective units' level of cohesion based on those facts, without regard to the accounts of subordinate units.

Force Buildup and Reserve Mobilization

The 7th Infantry Division began its planning for the Inchon invasion on 26 July 1950, only forty-seven days prior to the scheduled 11 September embarkation. However, they did not begin to receive large numbers of replacements from the United States until 23 August, with a total of almost 5,800 men arriving by 4 September. Most of these men were diverted from scheduled assignments elsewhere in Eighth Army. Still short of personnel, General MacArthur ordered the 7th Infantry Division to begin integrating KATUSA soldiers who arrived to Japan at a rate of approximately 2,000 per day from 18 to 24 August, only eighteen days prior to the scheduled embarkation.

The 1st Marine Division began their build up more than sixty days prior to the invasion and did not need to integrate any Korean nationals or American draftees. General MacArthur planned to lead with the Marine Division as he had tremendous

respect for the Marine Corps' experience in conducting amphibious operations during World War II and its continued training on the task during the interwar years. During the first meeting between General Smith and General MacArthur, General MacArthur, reflecting on his time commanding them in the New Britain campaign, told General Smith that he was aware of the Marine Corps' high standards and its penchant for perfection.¹ During World War II both the Army and the Marine Corps conducted numerous beach assaults throughout the Pacific under General MacArthur's watchful eye, so his decisions and demands were based on first-hand experience and not on some empty mantra. He saw that the performance of Marines proved to be special, and to have a Marine division that hung its hat on amphibious operations could not be ignored.

The mobilization process is not an indicator of unit cohesion as much as it simply creates the conditions in which cohesion is either spawned or inhibited. Given the short time to bring the two divisions to full wartime strength required organization and an accessible pool of men to draw from. The Marine Corps had both of these characteristics and the Army did not. The 7th Infantry Division was the last division from Japan to deploy into Korea and suffered enormous attrition as its men were stripped away to fill the first three divisions. And with these men went many interpersonal connections that led to personal commitment, coordination, and understanding of individual roles and responsibilities within subordinate units. As a result, there was a formidable requirement to literally scour the streets for warm bodies to bring the division up to wartime strength. Over 8,000 Korean civilians and a like number of Americans were run through abbreviated training cycles and placed into the division with little consideration of tactical competence and their ability to communicate with each other.

Strength and Composition

At the beginning of the Inchon campaign the 7th Infantry Division had a strength of just over 24,800 men, while the 1st Marine Division had 22,300 men in the division plus and an additional 3,900 Fleet Marine Force troops supporting the amphibious and close air support operations for both divisions. Although approximately the same strength, the experience level between the two divisions varied widely due to their composition.

When the 7th Infantry Division deployed in September 1950 it had only one-third of the members that were in the division prior to 25 June. The other two-thirds of the division were KATUSA conscripts and U.S. Army reservists who had been recalled involuntarily. The original members of the unit had served in occupation duty for the previous several years and had virtually no time to train beyond the battalion level. Additionally, the training that had been conducted had not been resourced adequately and had not focused on the types of operations that would be demanded in the Korean War. Draftees that arrived from Korea and some draftees from the United States were simply swiped off of the streets, given a hasty program of training, and thrust into combat units unaware of their own responsibilities and capabilities. The division had a short time to assemble and prepare for deployment and the men embarked with little personal knowledge of others and did not understand each other's combat responsibilities. The men also had little time or ability to trust or rely on each other since the language barrier prevented a great deal of the unit from being able to communicate with the rest. Eventually, the lack of tactical competence and communication caused a deformation of small unit teams and the newest members were relegated to being ammunition bearers

and laundry washers instead of riflemen involved in maneuvering against the enemy. The composition of the 7th Infantry Division was the single most damning factor in its complete lack of cohesion.

The 1st Marine Division, on the other hand, was homogeneous and drawn from a pool of experienced and proven veterans who required little training to adapt to the missions given to them. The majority of the division had previous experience with the weapon systems they would employ and they were already indoctrinated within the American and Marine cultures. It is clear that the Marine Corps had vastly superior experience and esprit de corps in its reserve forces, which made up the bulk of the 1st Marine Division.

The ability of individual Marines was demonstrated by adherence to rigid and enforced training standards prior to their assignment to the Marine Division. Almost every reservist was a veteran of World War II, and his willingness to volunteer for active duty when the need was voiced cannot be compared to any other force. The transition from civilian life back to military life was relatively seamless, especially since many of the recalled veterans actually replaced active duty Marines at posts and stations across the country. Furthermore, the few replacements that did arrive through the initial replacement programs had gone through the full complement of basic and advanced training and were measured against a rigid standard of readiness before being allowed to join the division in combat. The 1st Marine Division was more cohesive than the 7th Infantry Division and it stands as a great historical example of a unit built up with cohesion as a prime objective.

Leadership

Instrumental in the build up and employment of the 1st Marine Division was its commander, General Smith, who is well documented in many sources because of his confidence and poise, but the most serious highlight is the friction filled relationship with the X Corps commander, General Almond. It is apparent that General Smith was deliberate, methodical, and utterly devoted to the success of his unit. Because that kind of devotion is infectious, his men would emulate his precision and desire for success.

In contrast, Major General Barr, the 7th Infantry Division commander, is only briefly mentioned in most historical sources, mostly as an onlooker in the minutes of various meetings. A unit reflects the attributes of its commander and the relative shortcomings of the 7th Infantry Division are in concert with Major General Barr's shortcomings. Because Barr was a commander without a presence, his division emulated his meekness on the battlefield and General Almond, who had little confidence in him, probably felt that he had to micro manage its employment. This question remains: if Major General Barr was as forthright as General Smith would the 7th Infantry Division have found itself in such an unforgiving circumstance at the Chosin Reservoir?

The next two sections are devoted to offering a very brief characterization and chronology of the Inchon and Chosin Reservoir campaigns from the American perspective. In both campaigns two regiments of each division were heavily engaged in the fighting while the third regiments fought peripheral battles. During the Inchon campaign the 1st Marine Division's 1st and 5th Marine Regiments were the initial attacking force followed by the 7th Infantry Division's 31st and 32nd Infantry Regiments. The 7th Marine Regiment of the 1st Marine Division was eventually

employed as a supporting effort to the north of Seoul, and the 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, remained at sea in a reserve role during most of the fight and fought its first battle on 29 September, the day before Seoul was recaptured. During the Chosin Reservoir Campaign the 5th Marine, 7th Marine, 31st Infantry, and one battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiments were directly involved in fighting through CPV forces during the campaign. The 1st Marine Regiment was in a defensive posture south of the reservoir near Hagaru-ri while the 17th Infantry Regiment and the remaining two battalions of the 32nd Infantry Regiment were in defensive positions north and east of the reservoir.

Although it is true that the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions were both involved in combat operations during both campaigns, it is also true that the Marine Corps' success overshadows the lackluster performance of the 7th Infantry Division. Since the Marines did most of the fighting, they naturally took more casualties than the Army, but they also fought against a greater number of enemy forces, and caused a far greater number of enemy casualties. This will be seen in an analysis of the two campaigns. The enemy formations that faced the two divisions were of equal caliber at Inchon, but after an analytical look at the statistics it will be clear that the Army's performance was less than the equal of the Marines. The American situation in the Chosin Reservoir campaign was similar to that in the Inchon campaign, but the force ratios greatly favored the CPV forces and highlight even more the differences between the two American divisions.

American Maneuver Plan-Inchon

Prior to the Inchon invasion, intelligence reports estimated enemy strength to be approximately 7,500 men: 500 on the Wolmi-do isthmus, 500 at Kimpo Airfield, about 1,500 in and around Inchon city, and about 5,000 in Seoul.² Additionally, there were reports of units that could possibly be pulled from the Pusan fight and redirected north toward the Osan Airfield to help in the defense of Seoul. With reinforcements and units conscripted during the campaign, the total NKPA strength after the campaign was estimated to have been greater than 44,000 troops.³ The ultimate American campaign objectives were to retake Seoul, cut the lines of communication to North Korean forces on the Pusan perimeter, and then destroy North Korean forces caught between Seoul and Pusan.

Normal amphibious doctrine was very flexible. It allowed individual regiments to plan their assaults and make adjustments as needed, trusting in the ability of the regimental commander to meet the division commander's intent. However, at Inchon the 1st Marine Division wrote a complete and specific plan. This was done for two very good reasons. First, the tides and timing were very complex and required close and carefully supervised coordination. Second, the Marine division had just been formed and the operational and intelligence information required by planners was not available to the new regimental command teams in time for decentralized planning to take place. General Smith felt that centralizing the planning process would be the most effective road to success. He said, "under the circumstances, adoption of such methods was justified by the common background and training of all elements and individuals in amphibious doctrine,

procedures, tactics, and techniques.”⁴ General Smith felt that even a centrally planned operation would be well executed by competent Marines.

Enemy resistance was light during the initial landings on 15 September and there was a very high level of confusion suffered by the inexperienced and unsuspecting North Koreans charged with the defense of the coastal region during the massive pre-invasion bombardment. After the American assault, Marine reports characterized the enemy as dispirited and having little will to fight. Against approximately 400 entrenched NKPA soldiers, the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment suffered only seventeen wounded in less than five hours of fighting.⁵ Clearly the naval and air bombardment, coupled with almost 600 Marines and a platoon of Pershing tanks, represented an overwhelming and technologically superior power that erased any tactical advantage the NKPA might have had as the defenders of the fortified positions. But the rapid success cannot be hailed without regard to the intricate training and coordination between ground, air, and naval forces to conduct the organized and well-executed plan according to the same standards these forces conducted during their years of training together.

The first force to land at Inchon on 15 September 1950 was the 3rd Battalion of the 5th Marine Regiment, who assaulted the Wolmi-do isthmus. This attack was designed to clear enemy forces from the isthmus so the naval approach lanes would be unimpeded by direct enemy fires. With the Wolmi-do strong-point seized, the remainder of the 5th Marine Regiment landed at Red Beach, just north of Wolmi-do, and established a foothold to clear Inchon and begin an attack to secure the use of Kimpo Airfield, only ten air miles west of Seoul. At the same time, the 1st Marine Regiment landed on the 5th Marine Regiment’s southern flank, at Blue Beach, to begin an attack to regain the capital

city of Seoul. By the next day, the 5th and 1st Marine Regiments had fought through light resistance to establish a secure perimeter six miles east of the landing area and General Smith established the 1st Marine Division command post ashore. During this first phase of the operation against what was considered to be moderate delaying actions by the NKPA, the Marines of the 1st and 5th Marine Regiments suffered only 220 battle casualties, including twenty-two killed and two missing in action, and reported 1,350 enemy casualties and 300 enemy prisoners.⁶

On 17 September the 5th Marine Regiment began moving inland to seize the Kimpo Airfield and found light to no resistance, as the defenders were incapable of stopping the attack. Over the next two days, both regiments continued the attack to the east and found resistance in the urbanized area of Yongdungp'o increasingly more concentrated. About three miles west of Sosa the 1st Marine Regiment met the brunt of the well-trained 18th North Korean Division and was forced to dig in. During the fight for river crossing sites into Seoul the Marines suffered the effects of intense artillery fire, enemy obstacles, and dense concentrations of enemy troops. The 1st Marine Regiment attacked eastward into Yongdungp'o while the 5th Marine Regiment moved to the north to clear enemy forces out of the area of Haengju, just north of Seoul.

On 19 September the 5th Marines began to cross the Han River into Seoul and the 1st Marines attacked into Yongdungp'o. The first failure by the 5th Marines occurred during a night attack at Haenju when they failed to establish a bridgehead on the Han River. The boats that transported the initial soldiers across the river were disoriented due to jammed communications nets and heavy enemy fires. Also, since there was no opportunity to register mortar fires, the Marines were forced to contend with 4.2-inch

mortar rounds that fell short of their intended target. Swim teams were supposed to perform reconnaissance on the far side of the river obstacle, but with the mayhem that resulted the mission was aborted and the Marines returned to the near side.

The next day, the 5th Marines regrouped from the previous night's failure and commenced with the attack. The 1st Marine Division Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Craig reflected, "The eyes of the world were upon us. It would have looked bad for the Marines, of all people, to reach a river and not be able to cross."⁷ After mustering their pride, the Marines attacked and secured a bridgehead, taking only forty-three casualties in the process.⁸

During the first five days, 15 through 19 September, the Marine Division landed, secured and expanded the beachhead, and cleared isolated pockets of resistance inland approximately 12 miles. The Marines had two full regiments of approximately 6,500 infantrymen on land opposed by an estimated 10-20,000 defenders. The Marines suffered forty-five killed, 419 wounded, and two missing in action. Compared to the enemy 2,750 killed and 1,230 prisoners, the Marines fared very well.⁹ One Marine was killed and twenty-three wounded when a landing ship, tank (an armed marine vessel that transports troops and supplies ashore, commonly referred to as an LST) mistakenly opened fire on 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment that was unloading at Red Beach.¹⁰

Explaining the tremendous success of the 5th Marine Regiment requires an understanding that this regiment was an organized regiment even before the war began. Even though the Marine Corps had an experienced and well-trained reserve, there can be no substitute for time that members of a unit spend together so they hone their abilities to anticipate each other's actions and adjust to unforeseen tribulations. The 1st Marine

Regiment, although drawn from the same pool of “Marine types,” only had time for “the sketchiest training above the company level. The new 1st Marines had never operated tactically as a regiment, nor had it ever been concentrated in one place as an organizational entity up until the time it hit Blue Beach.”¹¹ Nonetheless, despite some orienteering difficulties by the transport vessel commanders through the low tides in the dark of night, the 1st Marine Regiment successfully landed and organized on Blue Beach and suffered few casualties. This is a tribute to the common experience and training shared throughout the Marine Corps.

Four days after the Marines had landed, the 7th Infantry Division’s 32nd Infantry Regiment, followed by its 31st Infantry Regiment, began their march across the southern flank of the Marines toward Suwon on 19 September. The 7th Infantry Division’s mission was to block any enemy reinforcements moving north from south of Seoul and prevent them from affecting the Marine seizure of the capital city. Ultimately, it would lay the foundation of the anvil so American forces from Pusan could smash the enemy. Their first major engagement was in the Tongdok mountain area south of Seoul where the 32nd Infantry Regiment met light to moderate resistance. The Americans succeeded in establishing its blocking position by evening.

This battle was indicative of the poor North Korean strategy to place the majority of their defenses outside of the city of Seoul, as well as the ineffective coordination between the two American divisions. By placing the majority of their forces outside of the city, the NKPA allowed the Americans to isolate its elements and systematically destroy the defenders of the major routes into the city of Seoul. The Marines had planned for the 7th Infantry Division to bypass the 1st Marine Regiment to the south to establish

the blocking positions. However, because the two units had difficulty communicating the 7th Infantry Division did not move far enough to the south and became entangled in the outskirts of the Yongdungp'o defensive belt. Fortunately, the resistance was light and the Army forces were able to break through to its positions.

During the evening of 21 September some of the most interesting fighting thus far for the Marines occurred as the 1st Marine Regiment attacked the heart of Yongdungp'o. During this operation, A Company of the 1st Marine Regiment accidentally slipped between two Marine battalions and found itself in downtown Yongdungp'o. The 18th Division forces were so concerned about the battalions on their flanks that they forgot to secure the center against, what was in this case, an accidental infiltration. Once the Marines of A Company realized what had happened they were able to destroy an ammunition cache, block access to storehouses, inflict over 275 casualties, and destroy four enemy tanks.¹² In the entire battle the company had only one wounded man, and succeeded in single-handedly defeating the Yongdungp'o defense.¹³ Once the North Korean 18th Division was defeated around Yongdungp'o, the city was easily overrun. The only other hope the NKPA had was to bolster its defenses by pulling divisions out of the fight on the Pusan perimeter to reinforce the garrison.

On 22 September, the city of Yongdungp'o was secured and the 5th Marine Regiment continued the battle for northwestern Seoul against the 2,500-man, well trained and battle hardened 25th Brigade.¹⁴ During the next three days X Corps forces pushed into Seoul from the south and west while NKPA forces fought ferociously to hold on to what little they had left. By midafternoon on 25 September this line was in Marine hands and the heart had effectively been removed from the Seoul defenses.

From 25 September to 27 September skirmishes continued to occur throughout the Seoul area as American forces continued to clear the area of resistance and pursue helpless forces fleeing to the north toward Uijongbu. At 1537 on 27 September the American flag was raised at the American Embassy and, for all practical purposes, the North Koreans were defeated.

The cost in human lives and agony was substantial during the Inchon campaign. The 1st Marine Division suffered 2,450 total casualties, including 417 killed, 2,029 wounded, and six missing in action.¹⁵ The 7th Infantry Division suffered 572 total battle casualties, including 106 killed, 409 wounded, and fifty-seven missing in action.¹⁶ Total Army casualties include 166 KATUSA soldiers.¹⁷ Within the division, the 32nd Infantry Regiment lost sixty-six killed, 272 wounded, and forty-seven missing in action.¹⁸

The Numbers at Inchon

This section will examine the relative comparison of the two divisions' casualty rates to show that casualty rates within them are inversely related to their levels of cohesion. The raw numbers and ratios are summed up in Table 5. The 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions have been shown to be roughly similar in tangible characteristics such as weapons, radios, numbers of soldiers, and the like. However, the intangible assets, such as homogeneity, leadership, training, and other elements of cohesion discussed in this paper, were far more refined in the Marine unit. Communist forces in both campaigns, although greatly superior in some tangible characteristics, such as the quantity of forces, simply could not get their superior numbers into the right place at the right time to destroy their objectives. After all of the comparisons of the two American divisions in this paper, the cohesion of the Marines is the single factor attributed to the

relative performance superiority of the 1st Marine Division over the 7th Infantry Division. But how does this relative level of cohesion relate to casualty numbers?

The 7th Infantry Division actually had a lower raw numbers of its force as casualties than did the 1st Marine Division. These numbers are deceiving, however, because they do not account for the ratios of the divisions to the enemies they were facing. To account for this, the following analysis is based on three facts. First, in both the Inchon and Chosin Reservoir campaigns, the two American divisions faced communist forces that, although different in size, had equal combat capabilities. In other words, outside of the raw numbers of enemy soldiers, neither division faced an enemy force that was significantly more or less powerful than the force faced by the other division. Second, casualties include those reported as killed, wounded, died of wounds, captured, and missing in action. Third, since the paper's focus is on resultant casualties, there will be no analysis of other measures such as terrain seizure, mission accomplishment, or some other comparable thesis.

Determining actual unit strengths during the Inchon Campaign can be confusing because of the different types of units involved and the echelons of employment. Exact calculations are nearly impossible to determine because some troops may have been considered by one historian or another as having been outside of the combat zone or not involved in combat operations, for example shore party troops and units held in reserve or that never deployed inland to oppose enemy forces.

For instance, noted U.S. Army historian Roy Appleman says that the 1st Marine Division had over 21,600 men involved in the Inchon Campaign as of 30 September, 15 days after the beginning of the campaign.¹⁹ The Marine Corps Historical Branch records

the 1st Marine Division at 24,877.²⁰ But a lot happened between 15 and 30 September. Total deployment strength of 24,877 men minus 2,288 reported casualties from 15 to 30 September is 22,589 men. This number is close to Appleman's number of 21,611 men if some 1,000 men are attributed to units like the 648-man Shore Party Battalion and 350 or so other troops that may not have been decisive in post-landing operations.²¹ For the purposes of this study, the Marine Corps Historical Branch number of 24,877 men will be used since it accounts for all personnel accessible to General Smith to fight this campaign. This number includes approximately 11,000 members of the infantry regiments and the remaining almost 14,000 combat support and service troops.

The strengths and losses of the 7th Infantry Division are sketchier than those of the 1st Marine Division because specific data is not nearly as available as the data for Marine units. When the 7th Infantry Division deployed from Japan it was at full war strength with 24,845 men.²² MacArthur retained control of the 17th Infantry Regiment until it arrived at Inchon on 24 September when it was subsequently employed under the command of the 7th Infantry Division.²³ It fought its first battle on 29 September.²⁴ Each infantry regiment had approximately the same strength of little more than 5,000 men—about two-thirds American and one-third KATUSA.²⁵ Therefore, the 7th Infantry Division had approximately 19,800 men through most of the Inchon campaign. This number includes over 10,000 members of the 31st and 32nd Infantry Regiments and almost 10,000 combat support and service personnel.

It might make sense to simply use 19,800 as the number of men employed by the 7th Infantry Division since the 17th Infantry Regiment hardly had time to add meaningful data to the equation. However, in the last days of the campaign this regiment suffered

relatively high numbers of casualties. Even though they arrived late, their representation is essential in the explanation of the relationship between cohesion and casualties since their employment may very well be an example of the lack of cohesion at the division level, particularly when discussing the effects of combat experience.

This means that although General Barr may have been a weak commander, he can only fight with the forces he is given and when they are given to him. The fact that one of his regiments was withheld and then thrown into the fight at the last moment clearly indicates that, as a division sized unit, the 7th Infantry Division could not fight at Inchon cohesively. However, in order to prevent discounting the results based on this predicament, both division strengths of 24,845 and 19,800 men will be depicted in the final analysis to show the reader that the difference is not relevant to the thesis.

The enemy strength and casualties in this campaign are also sketchy since most records of the NKPA are not accessible to researchers. The numbers that do exist are a combination of accounts from intelligence units that operated in the area, NKPA prisoner interrogations, and report from soldiers that witnessed the fighting. What is known is that pre-invasion estimate of 7,500 to 8,000 NKPA troops was highly conservative in number, but the experience and capability of NKPA forces were assessed correctly.²⁶ In the end, the NKPA had more forces than anticipated, somewhere between 35,000 and 40,000 men, but they were, in fact, green.²⁷ This number included approximately 10,000 from the NKPA 18th Infantry Division in Seoul, several regiments totaling approximately 10,000 men, and 15,000 to 20,000 miscellaneous troops such as engineers, railroad troops, and police. The Marine Corps Historical Branch describes the NKPA operation as such:

The enemy's method of operation, except for a brief determined stand near and in Seoul, consisted of moderate to strong delaying actions. The first reaction following the initial disorganization at Inchon was an attempt to contain our advance until such a time as sufficient reinforcements could arrive to warrant initiating a counteroffensive. In view of the scarcity of reinforcements and our own rapid advances, this never materialized.²⁸

Of the 40,000 enemy troops only 30,000 can be considered to be fighting forces. The break down the specific whereabouts of these troops is as follows: 2,000 defended Wolmi-do and Inchon, 5,000 defended Yongdungp'o, 8,000 were in Seoul, at least 10,000 between the Han River and Suwon, 2,000 to 3,000 south of Suwon toward Osan, and perhaps 10,000 miscellaneous soldiers that were uncommitted or arrived too late to be employed.²⁹ Since the latter 10,000 soldiers were uncommitted or arrived too late, they will not be considered in this study. The next question is, who fought whom?

The 1st and 5th Marine Regiments initially defeated the 2,000 NKPA soldiers at Inchon as they were the only force in contact in that area. With assistance from the 5th Marine Regiment from the north and the 32nd Infantry Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division in the south, the 1st Marine Regiment was successful in repositioning and ultimately capturing Yongdungp'o on 22 September. The NKPA 18th Division and one regiment from the NKPA 9th Infantry Division, consisting of 5,000 men, had defended it. The 5th Marine Regiment defeated approximately 5,000 enemy soldiers of the 25th Infantry Brigade and an independent regiment defending the northwestern approach to Seoul after General Smith ordered the 7th Marine Regiment to reinforce them on their left flank. By 24 September, the 5th Marine Regiment was covering crossing sites for the 1st Marine Regiment putting all three Marine regiments on the north side of the Han River attacking into the heart of Seoul and the NKPA fortified stronghold.

Until this point the only action the 7th Infantry Division had seen was sporadic fighting along the 7th Marine Regiment's southern flank, particularly in the 32nd Infantry Regiment's fight at Tongdok Mountain.³⁰ The main battle was on 20 September against a strong point manned by unknown NKPA elements. These enemy elements were most likely portions of various units thrown together in the defense of the NKPA lines of communication. Meanwhile, the 31st Infantry was busy fighting its only significant battle on the southeast side of Seoul against approximately 2,000 men from the 105th Armored Division that were attempting to reinforce the Seoul garrison. Beginning on 23 September, the 31st Infantry Regiment successfully staved off an attack by the enemy armored force and caused severe damage and casualties. American losses were slight.

From 24 to 25 September both divisions moved into positions and began to enter Seoul. General Almond thwarted General Smith's plan to use only Marines to seize the city by ordering the 32nd Infantry Regiment to cross the Han River and seize South Mountain. During the execution of this plan the Army soldiers fought nearly 1,000 NKPA troops atop the mountain and cleared their zone.³¹ The one and only significant battle by the newly arrived 17th Infantry Regiment was on 29 September against an enemy force south of Seoul.³² On 30 September all 7th Infantry Division elements would be south of Seoul as the anvil awaiting the crushing pursuit of the Eighth Army hammer.

The Marines suffered their greatest losses against the 8,000-man NKPA Seoul defense. With the 18th NKPA Division, the 25th Brigade, and the 78th Independent Regiment in trenches and on hilltops, the Marines suffered their greatest casualties to date. Against an entrenched defense the 1st Marine Division would suffer 1,482 casualties between 21 and 27 September, the greatest single days loss being 285 on 24

September.³³ The following days would be marked by sporadic fighting and reduced casualties and after a week of cleaning the city both divisions were on their way to the next campaign.

During the Inchon campaign 24,877 Marines fought against approximately 25,000 NKPA forces. Enemy numbers include 2,000 at Inchon, 5,000 the Yongdungp'o area, 8,000 in Seoul, and approximately 10,000 reinforcing troops in and around Seoul.³⁴ The Marines suffered 2,450 casualties and inflicted 13,666 casualties on the NKPA.³⁵ In the same manner, the 7th Infantry Division input 24,845 men, and 19,800 men if considering the division without the 17th Infantry Regiment, and the NKPA input approximately 13,000 men. NKPA forces included 10,000 between the Han River and Suwon and approximately 3,000 in the Osan area.³⁶ The 7th Infantry Division inflicted about 3,000 casualties and suffered 572 casualties, or 493 if the 17th Infantry Regiment's seventy-nine casualties are not considered.³⁷ It is clear that the 7th Infantry Division was less efficient than the 1st Marine Division and suffered more relative casualties as a result.

Table 5. Strength and Casualty Numbers During the Inchon Campaign							
Unit	Friendly Strength	Enemy Strength	Casualties Suffered	Casualties Inflicted	Casualty Ratio	Force Ratio	Efficiency Rating
1st Marine Division	24,877	25,000	2,450	13,666	5.6	1.0	5.6
7th Infantry Division	24,845	13,000	572	3,000	5.2	1.9	2.7
7th Infantry Division (-)	19,800	13,000	493	3,000	6.1	1.5	4.0

American Maneuver Plan-Chosin Reservoir

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign is a much simpler campaign to understand than the Inchon Campaign. It was basically a tactical movement that quickly turned into a defense that even more quickly turned into a withdrawal. As mentioned earlier, each division had two regiments deep in the fight and one on the periphery. In this campaign,

the peripheral regiments were the 17th Infantry and the 1st Marine Regiments. The 17th Infantry Regiment had been moved far north to the Yalu River and was outside of mutually supporting distance. The 1st Marine Regiment, removed from the main attack, did participate in direct action against at least two divisions, beginning with the 124th CCF Division in early November near Hagaru-ri. This battle was the first indicator that a significant Chinese force was in the area.

The first major contact between CPV and American forces occurred at Yudam-ni on the northwest side of the Chosin Reservoir. On 26 November X Corps forces were positioned throughout northeastern Korea. The 5th and 7th Marine Regiments of the 1st Marine Division were situated to the west of the Chosin Reservoir attempting to establish a secure east flank for the Eighth Army while the 1st Marine Regiment held a defensive position near Hagaru-ri. The 7th Infantry Division was spread throughout northeastern Korea. The 17th Infantry Regiment occupied Hyesanjin far to the north along the Yalu River. Two battalions of the 32nd Infantry Regiment were in the Kapsan-Samsu region just south of the 17th Infantry Regiment. The 31st Infantry Regiment and a battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment were repositioning to the east side of the Chosin to allow the Marines to continue moving west.³⁸

The 1st Marine Division, with over 25,000 men, moved two complete regiments, the 5th and 7th Marines, up the west side of the reservoir to begin their attack near the village of Yudam-ni in support of Eighth Army in the west. General Smith felt that the threat of contact with the Chinese was high and maneuvered his elements deliberately and methodically to ensure he had mutual support if, or when, contact was made. The 1st Marine Regiment was left to hold the road intersections between Hagaru-ri and Sudong.

On the night of 27 November, the CPV 9th Army Group attacked the 5th Marine Regiment near Yudam-ni with four divisions from the 20th Army. At the same time, two divisions of the 27th Army attacked from the north; one against the Marines at Yudam-ni and the other against the 31st Infantry Regiment on the eastern side of the Chosin Reservoir. In the west, General Smith ordered his 7th Marine Regiment to move north in support of the 5th Marine Regiment that was leading the attack and had several isolated company outposts.³⁹ For two full days the Marines would systematically consolidate the two beleaguered regiments against five CPV divisions, approximately 37,500 men, until the order to withdraw from the Yudam-ni area was given on 30 November.⁴⁰ By 1 December the two Marine Regiments were consolidated south of Yudam-ni and preparing to fight their way back toward Hagaru-ri and by 4 December were consolidated at Hagaru-ri.⁴¹ From then until 10 December they moved back to Hungnam through the CPV 76th and 77th Divisions, approximately 15,000 men, from the CPV 26th Army to embark for the journey to Hungnam.

The 7th Infantry Division, on 24 November, had a total strength of 16,001 men.⁴² On the east side of the Chosin Reservoir, the 31st Infantry Regiment found itself in contact with the 80th Division of the CPV 27th Army, probably the only division that made contact with the 31st Infantry Regiment.⁴³ Beginning on 28 November the Chinese forces caused high numbers of casualties in the 31st Infantry Regiment and forced them to consolidate into defensive pockets.⁴⁴ Chinese forces succeeded in cutting off supply routes to the regiment and the heavy fighting caused maintenance and ammunition supply issues. The biggest problem for the American regiment was the high number of casualties that needed to be treated and transported. Although aerial resupply did succeed

in providing the Americans some much-needed ammunition, the Chinese had sufficient road blockades that severely slowed the withdrawal and prevented reinforcements from arriving.

In spite of Marine air support, repeated attempts to break out from the reservoir area were stifled due to heavy enemy fire and mounting casualties. It was not until 4 December that the remnants of the regiment, historically referred to as Task Force Faith, were able to make it out by leaving equipment and casualties behind and infiltrating through enemy lines in small groups of desperate survivors. By 4 December, only a few more than 1,000 of about 2,500 men in Task Force Faith had made it back to Hagaru-ri. Of those, only about 385 were able to continue fighting.⁴⁵ The remainder of the 7th Infantry Division met with small pockets of resistance as they moved directly back to Hungnam. There is no indication that any significant resistance impeded their movement.

The three individual regiments were dispersed throughout eastern Korea in almost a haphazard fashion, some say due to the micro meddling of the X Corps commander, General Almond, and others say due to the incompetence of General Barr. The 17th Infantry Regiment had pushed from northeast of Hamhung to the area of Hyesanjin near the Yalu, followed by the majority of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. The 31st Infantry Regiment, along with one battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment, was supposed provide flank security to the 1st Marine Division along the eastern side of the Chosin Reservoir as it crept toward the Yalu. The road along the reservoir was steep, windy, and narrow, and the individual units were forced to spread themselves out in order to traverse it.

In a series of coordinated maneuvers and mutually supporting withdrawals, the Marines escaped through their gauntlet against an estimated 52,000 CPV forces with a

total casualty count of a little over 3,600 men. General Smith and the 1st Marine Division opted to maneuver methodically and deliberately with two, mutually supporting regiments in the lead and one regiment in support to the rear. The 7th Infantry Division, on the other hand, had dispersed its three regiments throughout the entire X Corps area of operation and was unable to provide any mutual support. The Army division was ill prepared to defend its tiny 3,000-man force on the narrow road while they attempted to out-maneuver an estimated 30,000 CPV troops. The Americans suffered almost 2,000 losses in this fight alone to bring their total number of casualties to over 4,300. Perhaps the loss of 2,000 of the 3,000 men is justification for the large shadow this battle casts.

The Numbers at the Chosin Reservoir

Most of the combat and casualty information clearly indicates that the CPV force directed its attack on units around the Chosin Reservoir, as opposed to areas in other parts of northeast Korea. Exact numbers of enemy casualties are impossible to determine, especially since most of the American force was destroyed. At best, an educated guess can be attributed in such a manner as to not unfairly bias the results, as shown in Table 6. In this case, the strength of the CPV 80th Division was approximately 7,500 men.⁴⁶ It is known that the division suffered so many casualties, probably in the thousands, that it was combat ineffective for the remainder of the fight.⁴⁷ Based on this, the fighting strength of the CPV 80th Division is conservatively placed at fifty percent strength. This would mean that they suffered approximately 3,750 casualties.

In the Chosin Reservoir Campaign, during the period of 27 November to 10 December, the conclusion reached is the same as in the Inchon Campaign, even though the raw numbers are quite different. The 1st Marine Division was more efficient than the

7th Infantry Division. The 1st Marine Division had 25,473 men on 27 November and had been opposed by an estimated 52,500 enemy soldiers, seven divisions at approximately 7,500 soldiers per division, from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri.⁴⁸ The eight days of fighting from 27 November to 4 December between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri cost the Marines 2,573 battle casualties. Casualties from 5 to 11 December were approximately 1,067 Marines bringing the total to 3,640 Marines.⁴⁹ The CPV will to fight had been withered by the American resistance, but mostly by the harsh environmental conditions.

Estimates put the total number of Chinese casualties inflicted by the Marines around 37,500 men; 22,500 as a result of Marine ground forces and 15,000 as a result of Marine air forces.⁵⁰ The 1st Marine Division's training and ability to communicate with its air component greatly enhanced its ability to withdraw with relatively few casualties. The Army division had 16,001 soldiers and was opposed mainly by the CPV 80th division of approximately 7,500 enemy soldiers.⁵¹ The 31st Infantry Regiment accounted for approximately 3,288 men and bore the brunt of the attack by the CPV 80th Division.⁵² Although specific unit data is not available, it is true that elements of various CPV forces did make contact with the 17th and 32nd Infantry Regiments, mainly in probing attacks as they held the defensive line around Hungnam. But sporadic fighting between forces was not uncommon as units moved between major battles. No major additional units can be identified in the area of operation so no number of enemy troops will be assigned to them. The 7th Infantry Division suffered 4,362 casualties and inflicted 3,750 casualties on the Chinese during this campaign.⁵³

Between the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions it is clear that the Marines were far more efficient than their Army counterparts in the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

The Marines had a smaller force ratio than did the Army and inflicted a far greater number of casualties. Again it appears that there is an inverse relationship between the level of cohesion and the casualty rate. The Marines were more cohesive and suffered fewer casualties relative to the force they were fighting. Relative to the two units' performance here, it appears that cohesion and casualty rates are inversely related. Higher cohesion relates to a lower casualty rate.

Table 6. Strength and Casualty Numbers During the Chosin Reservoir Campaign							
Unit	Friendly Strength	Enemy Strength	Casualties Suffered	Casualties Inflicted	Casualty Ratio	Force Ratio	Efficiency Rating
1st Marine Division	25,473	52,500	3,640	37,500	10.3	0.5	21.2
7th Infantry Division	16,001	7,500	4,362	3,750	0.9	2.1	0.4
31st Infantry Regiment	3,288	7,500	1,500	3,750	2.5	0.4	5.7

Analyzing the Numbers

The purpose of this paper is to determine if there is a relationship between unit cohesion and casualty rates. But, simply comparing raw casualty numbers suffered by the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions is deceiving if the relative sizes of each of these divisions to the enemy forces they faced, as well as the degree of mission accomplishment they had are not also compared. For example, take two divisions that performed the same mission, suffered an equal number of casualties, and accomplished their missions to the same degree. Say one division had 10,000 men against an enemy force of 20,000 men and the other had 20,000 men against an enemy force of 10,000 men. It would follow that the first unit performed more efficiently than the latter. If only the fact that the first division suffered one-third more casualties than the second was

changed it could still be said that they were more efficient, even though they suffered more casualties, because it was fighting a force twice its size.

Of course this sterile example could never really occur. But the idea of measuring efficiency by comparing force ratios, casualty ratios, and mission accomplishment does have merit. In this paper a great deal of time has been spent discussing the events and characteristics that explain *why* there is a discrepancy in the levels of cohesion between the 1st Marine and the 7th Infantry Divisions prior to the Korean War. In this section the discussion will focus on the result of cohesion and its relationship to casualty rates.

Earlier in this paper the definition of cohesion was defined as the characteristics that cause a unit to operate more efficiently and effectively. Efficiency is the ratio of output to the total input and is expressed as a mathematical ratio; much like a car's fuel efficiency, for example, is determined by the mathematical ratio of the number of miles driven divided by the number of gallons of fuel used to drive that many miles. If that car was rated at twenty miles per gallon of fuel without a second rating to compare it to the result would be inconclusive. However, if it was to be compared to a second car with a rating of ten miles per gallon of fuel it would be concluded that the first car was *more* efficient than the second even though neither could be labeled as *truly* efficient or inefficient. In the two campaigns discussed here, the missions of the two divisions were the same--to destroy enemy forces by killing them--and it is self evident that the desire would be to accomplish the mission with the least number of friendly casualties. Therefore, a unit's efficiency is determined by the mathematical ratio of the number of forces destroyed, output, divided by the number of forces used to do that, input; logically, the greater the number the greater the efficiency of the unit.

Like the car analogy, there is a second consideration. In order to get a true appreciation of the relative efficiency of the two divisions discussed in this paper, one must consider the size and effect of the enemy forces engaged by units. Much like determining the relative efficiency of various cars, they must be driven at the same speeds, on the same terrain, under the same environmental conditions. This prevents one car from being unfairly rated because its measure was taken after being driven at high speed through the mountains and then compared to a car driven slowly on a flat track.

In order to accomplish this fair and balanced comparison, an analysis of the relative values of the numbers of casualties inflicted and the size of the force involved in the fighting must be completed. The values and ratios are reflected for the Inchon and Chosin Reservoir Campaigns in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. First a comparison of the numbers of casualties inflicted by each force will be conducted. During the Inchon campaign the 1st Marine Division inflicted 13,666 casualties compared to the NKPA that inflicted 2,450. The resultant ratio is approximately five to one, or a numerical value of five. The 7th Infantry Division inflicted 3,000 casualties and the NKPA inflicted 572. The result is also a ratio of about five to one, or five. During the Chosin Reservoir campaign the 1st Marine Division inflicted 37,500 casualties compared to 3,640 inflicted by the CPV, a ratio of ten to one, or ten. The 7th Infantry Division inflicted 3,750 casualties compared to 4,362 casualties inflicted by the CPV. This ratio is just under one to one, or one.

The second comparison is the relative sizes of the forces. The 1st Marine Division at Inchon had 24,877 Marines opposed by 25,000 NKPA. The force ratio is determined by dividing 24,877 by 25,000. The result is basically a one to one ratio, or numerical

value equal to one. The 7th Infantry Division had 24,845 soldiers opposed by 13,000 NKPA. The resultant force ratio is determined by dividing 24,845 by 13,000. This result is basically a two to one ratio, or quotient equal to two. If the same formula is applied to the Chosin Reservoir campaign the resultant quotients for the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Divisions, respectively, are one-half and two.

Lastly, in order to determine the efficiency of the two divisions the output, or casualty ratio, must be compared to the input, or force ratio, to determine the relative efficiency of the 1st Marine and the 7th Infantry Divisions in the two campaigns. At Inchon, the 1st Marine Division had a casualty ratio of five and a force ratio of one. Dividing the output by the input results in an efficiency value of five. Again, by itself this is of little analytical value. However, when set next to the 7th Infantry Division's efficiency value of two, one can be clear that the Marines were more efficient even if they are not truly efficient. The efficiency values during the Chosin Reservoir campaign are even more telling when the 1st Marine Division's efficiency value of over twenty-one is compared to the 7th Infantry Division's despicable efficiency value of less than one-half.

It is not the case that this mathematical model explains *why* this discrepancy in efficiency occurred, but it does establish a relative measure of the performances between the units involved to compare to the *why* that was fleshed out earlier in the paper. It also shows that the 1st Marine Division, that had a higher level of cohesion than the 7th Infantry Division, was more efficient in combat and suffered fewer relative casualties. Thus it appears that an inverse relationship does exist and, in the case of these two divisions, the cause must be attributed to cohesion. The following pages of this chapter

will break down these numbers and explain where they came from and how they may have occurred.

Conclusion

It is clear from the research that the conditions were far more favorable for the 1st Marine Division to enter the Korean War as a cohesive force than they were for the 7th Infantry Division. And, in the final analysis, it is clear that the 1st Marine Division performed much more efficiently than the 7th Infantry Regiment during the Inchon and Chosin Reservoir campaigns. The performance of these two units is directly related to the qualities examined in this paper that led to their relative levels of cohesion.

As a whole, the Marines were more homogenous, more experienced, better trained, better equipped, and better led at the division level. They were able to perform under the pressure of combat and they maintained a high standard of performance in spite of the odds that were against them. On the other hand, the 7th Infantry Division was poorly trained, composed of a hodge-podge of cultures and experience levels, poorly equipped, and had become fat and soft. The 1st Marine Division not only went into the war as a more cohesive unit than the 7th Infantry Division, it also performed more efficiently during operations in the war. The experiences of these two units show that there is, indeed, a relationship that exists between cohesion and casualty and casualty recovery rates.

¹Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, "US Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, vol. II, The Inchon-Seoul Operation" (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1955), 40.

²Roy E. Appleman, "South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986), 500.

- ³Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 325-326.
- ⁴Ibid., 73.
- ⁵Ibid., 94.
- ⁶Ibid., 333.
- ⁷Ibid., 194.
- ⁸Ibid., 196.
- ⁹Ibid., 333.
- ¹⁰Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 507.
- ¹¹Ibid., 114.
- ¹²Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 231.
- ¹³Ibid., 231.
- ¹⁴Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 523.
- ¹⁵Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation 333.
- ¹⁶Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 541.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁹Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 605.
- ²⁰Ibid.
- ²¹Ibid. Casualty figures found on page 333. Individual unit strengths found on page 321.
- ²²Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 492.
- ²³Ibid., 539(note).
- ²⁴Ibid., 539.
- ²⁵Ibid., 512. The available number is for the 32nd Infantry Regiment.
- ²⁶Ibid., 500.

²⁷Clay Blair, "The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-53." (New York: Time Books, 1987), 273.

²⁸Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 325.

²⁹Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 540.

³⁰Montross, The Inchon-Seoul Operation, 221.

³¹Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, 530.

³²Ibid., 539.

³³Ibid., 541.

³⁴Ibid., 540.

³⁵Ibid., 540.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 539-540.

³⁸Billy C. Mossman, "Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951" (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 86.

³⁹Ibid., 96.

⁴⁰Ibid., 129.

⁴¹Ibid., 137.

⁴²Roy E. Appleman, "East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950" (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 61.

⁴³Ibid., 301.

⁴⁴Mossman, 98-99.

⁴⁵Ibid., 136.

⁴⁶Appleman, East of Chosin, 304.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Montross, The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, 353-354, 379.

⁴⁹Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, “US Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, vol. III, The Chosin Reservoir Campaign” (Washington D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1957), 382.

⁵⁰Montross, The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, 351.

⁵¹Ibid., 353-354.

⁵²Appleman, East of Chosin, 343.

⁵³Mossman, 147.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions fought two campaigns in Korea between September and December 1950. These divisions' levels of unit cohesion prior to and during their employment affected the number of men who became casualties during the three and one-half months of combat. Casualty rates can be affected by friendly-enemy force ratios and tactical advantages, but this historical analysis shows that units opposing similar enemies in similar tactical situations still have markedly different casualty rates that are not attributable to enemy numbers and disposition. Programs such as the Selective Service and the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army (KATUSA), originally designed to help combat units, ultimately destroyed any hope for cohesion that the 7th Infantry Division might have had. Comparing the performances of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division, after highlighting the myriad of circumstances that impacted those performances, defines a relationship between the levels of cohesion and the numbers of casualties they suffered. It is clear in the end that the 1st Marine Division was more cohesive than the 7th Infantry Division and suffered fewer casualties. It appears that a relationship between unit cohesion and casualty rates does exist.

This paper has covered many aspects of cohesion. However, each person must decide for himself what it means to be a cohesive unit. It has been suggested that cohesion is the combination of at least six elements: competence, collective effort, common goal, coordination, caring or emotional attachment, and, most importantly, communication. If units are trained to a common and appropriately high standard and

have the equipment and leadership necessary to carry out their mission, it will be much more probable that they will be able to coordinate operations and focus the collective effort on a common goal. As these characteristics develop over time the unit will undoubtedly bond, and through its ability to communicate necessary information it will cohere and become an orderly whole from disparate parts.

A neglected and fiscally constrained reserve system was derelict in providing the quality of soldier required for unit cohesion in the 7th Infantry Division during the first months of high intensity combat operations. The Marine Corps' ability to rapidly build up the 1st Marine Division as an integrated and competent fighting force made them far more capable of performing as a cohesive whole during the two campaigns at Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir. Only when a unit is cohesive will it be capable of exercising its maximum potential and performing efficiently on the field of battle. Today, efforts are being made to reorganize the American Army to breed cohesion. This paper was not an historical and comprehensive investigation to determine why units were cohesive or not. The goal of this paper was to flesh out the elements of cohesion, determine what the two divisions in question relative levels of cohesion were, and see whether there was a relationship between the level of cohesion and the casualty rates. The aim was to answer the primary questions: was there a relationship between unit cohesion and the casualty rates of American losses in the 1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions during the Korean War? Did the more cohesive unit have lower casualty rates? Additionally, what are the factors that affected unit cohesion?

These questions have been answered. There was an inverse relationship between unit cohesion and casualty rates. The 1st Marine Division was relatively more cohesive

and it had lower relative casualty rates during the first two campaigns than did the 7th Infantry Division. Lastly, there are a multitude of factors that define cohesion. Many were talked about in this paper and include leadership, training, equipment, and culture. The reader will need to decide for himself if there are others that not only apply, but are essential to a fuller understanding of cohesion.

The relationship that existed in the Korean War is still valid today—cohesiveness determines how many will or will not die along the path to victory. After a complete study of this relationship, the reader is better armed to address the current Army's desire to build units under concepts like the Unit Manning System (UMS), which is specifically designed to decrease personnel turbulence in units and set the conditions for increased cohesion. Cohesion also impacts the conduct of joint operations, the implementation of mobilization and reserve augmentation plans, and the estimation of the post-conflict casualty recovery efforts.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Korea

Source: Billy C. Mossman, “Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951” (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 6.

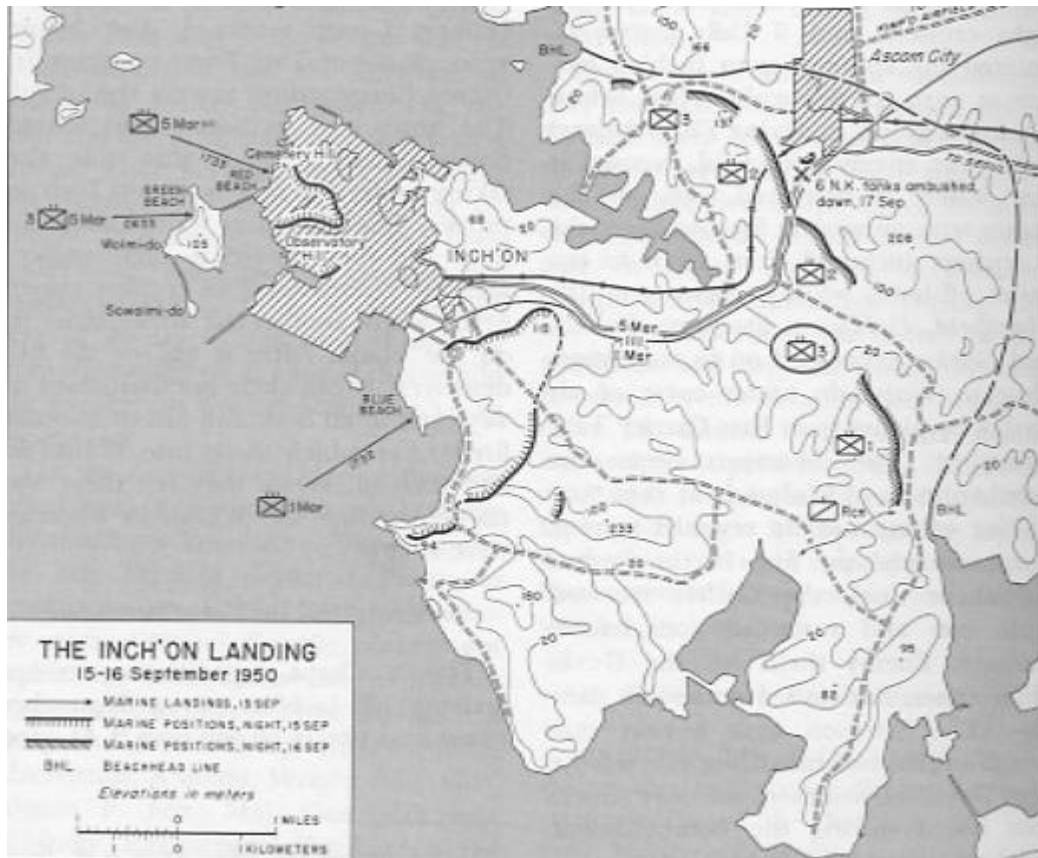


Figure 2. Inchon Landing

Source: Roy E. Appleman, "South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986), 504.

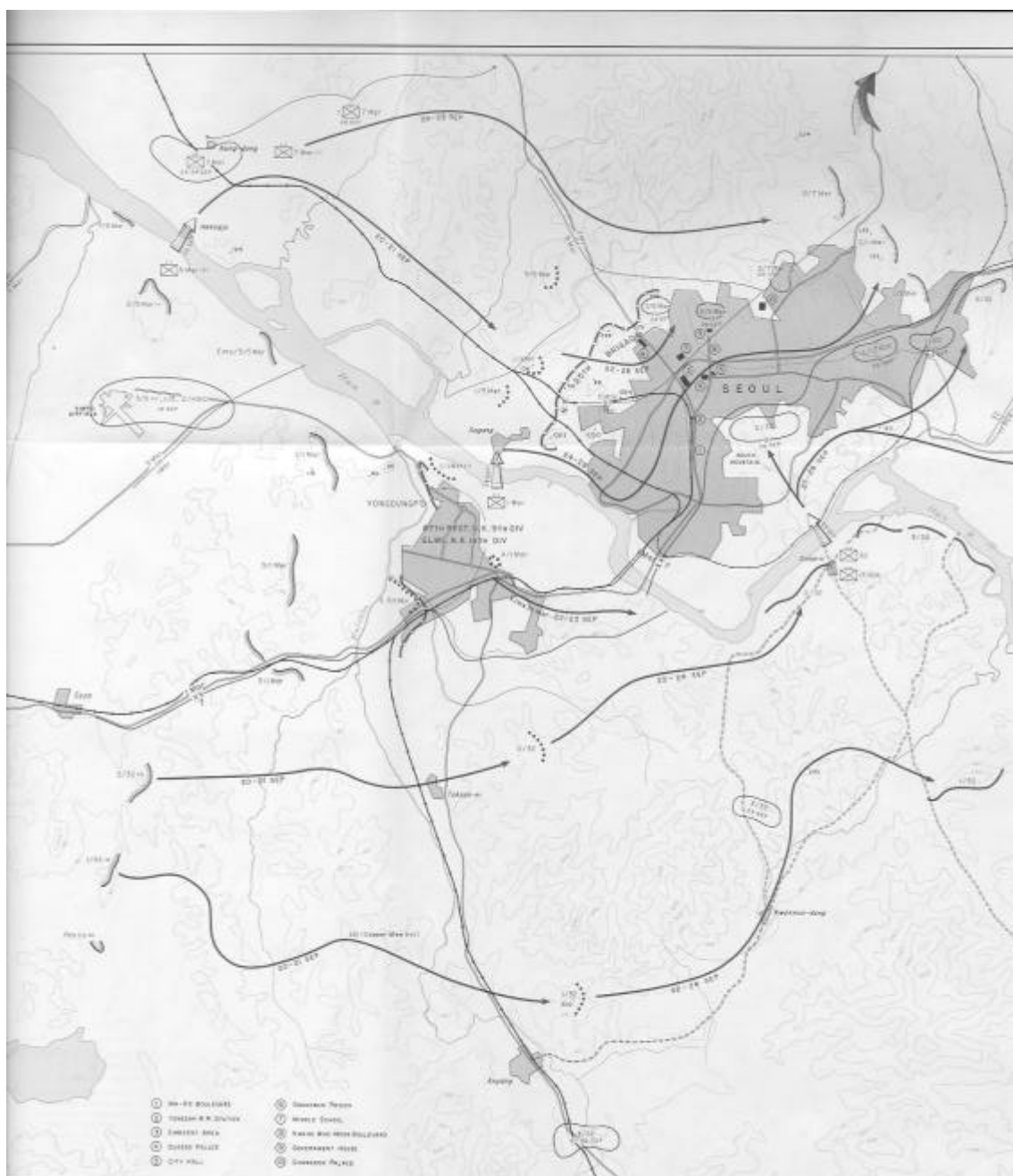


Figure 3. Battle for Seoul.

Source: Roy E. Appleman, "South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950." (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986), 504.

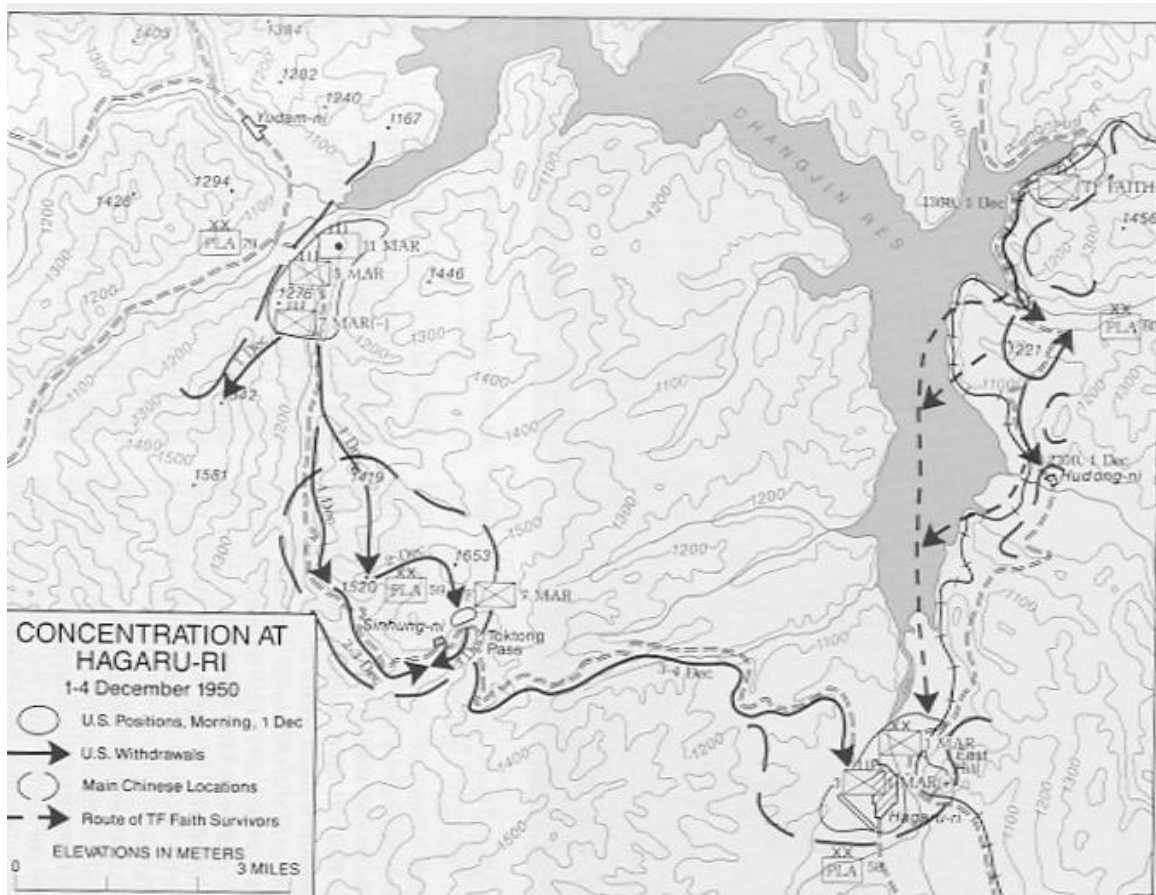


Figure 6. U.S. Consolidation at Hagaru-ri

Source: Billy C. Mossman, "Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951" (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 133.

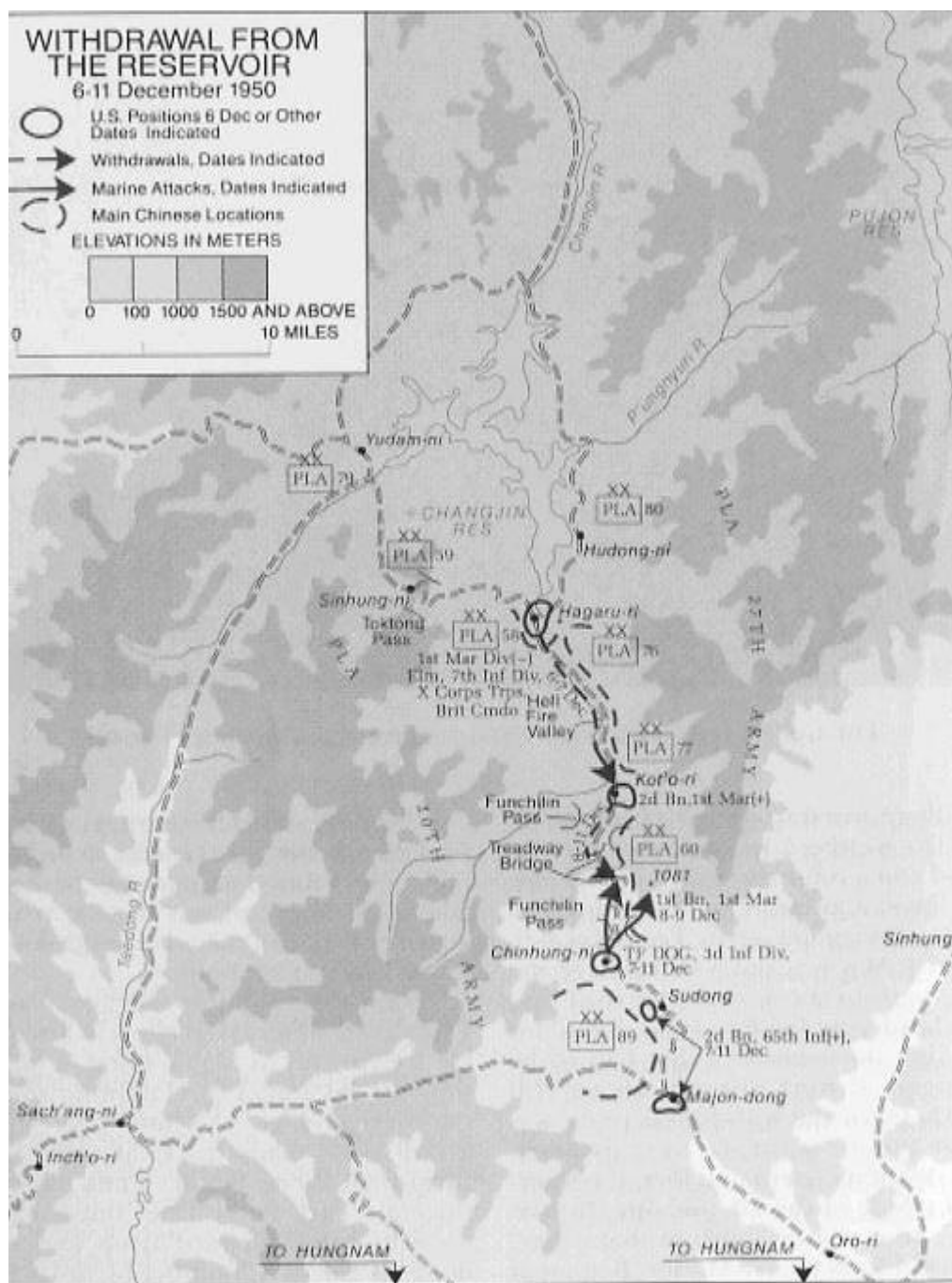


Figure 7. Withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir

Source: Billy C. Mossman, "Ebb and Flow, November 1950-July 1951"
 (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 144.

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